

# BELGIUM UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION

By BRAND WHITLOCK

American Minister to Belgium.

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"Many American diplomatists have lately published accounts of their experiences in the days when their country was still neutral. To Mr. Brand Whitlock we are more grateful than to any of the others, for he has given us literature as well as information. His book in that respect strikes a note of distinction not to be found in those of Mr. Gerard and Mr. Morgenthau, and he has an advantage over Dr. Henry van Dyke, who also writes in the manner of a man of letters, in having a far more striking story to tell. *His work will last not only as one of the documents of the war, but as one of its classics.*"

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# Race & Nationality

An Inquiry into the Origin  
and Growth of Patriotism

BY

JOHN OAKESMITH, D.Lit., M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"THE RELIGION OF PLUTARCH: A PAGAN CREED OF APOSTOLIC TIMES"

"Augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur,  
Inque brevi spatio mutantur saecula animantum  
Et quasi cursores vitae lampada tradunt."

LUCRETIVS, II. 77-79.

"Τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκε μηκέτι τοῦ  
γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι."

ISOCRATES, *Panegyricus* 51



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"The principle of nationality has defied definition and even analysis."—*The Eastern Question* (p. 174), by J. A. R. Marriott, M.P. (The Clarendon Press, 1917).

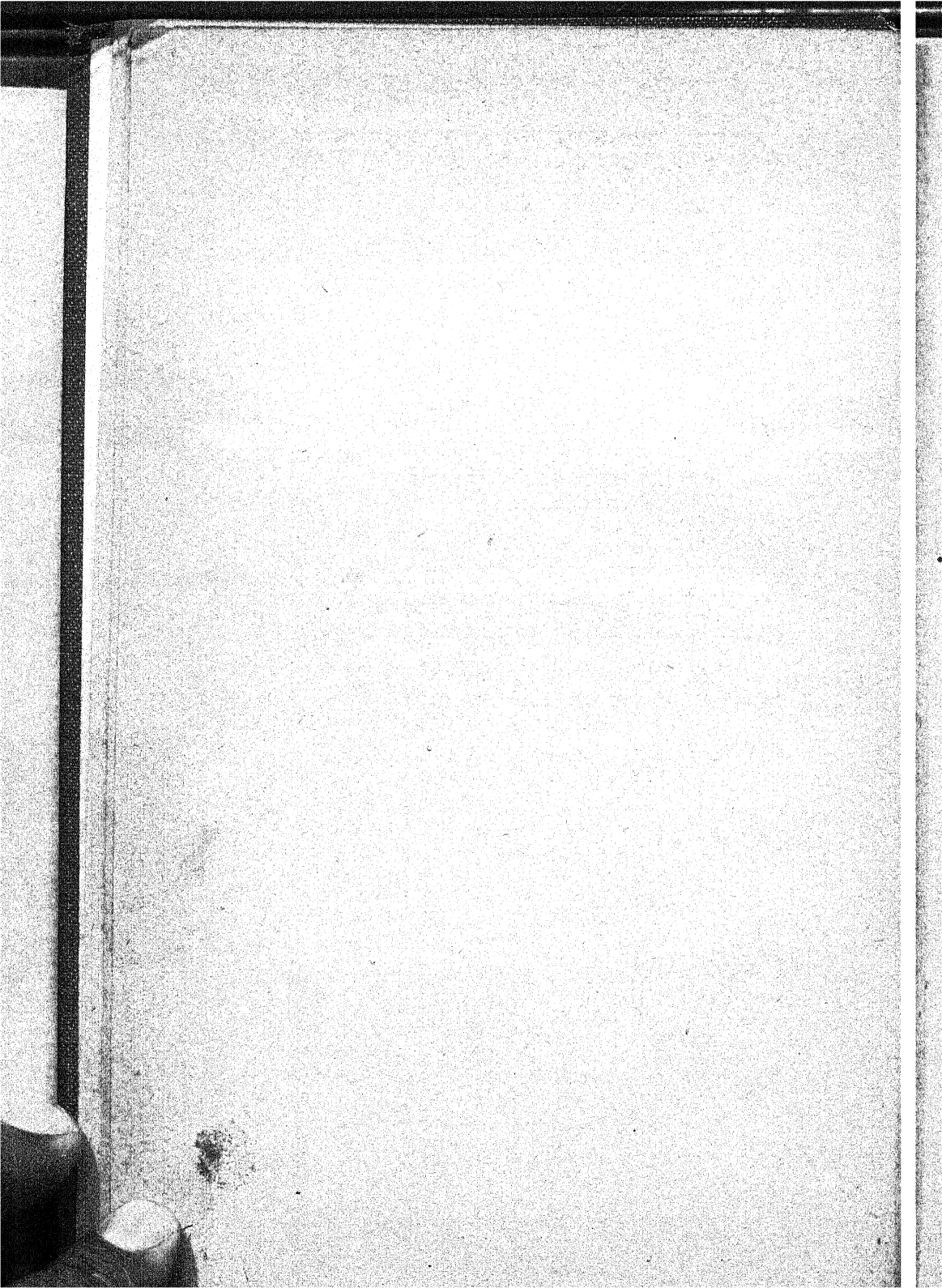
"With a new world opening before us, it is just the moment to take stock of words and phrases in common use, and to give them precision and directness."—Lord Esher: Letter on "The Meaning of Patriotism" in *The Morning Post*, October 9, 1918.

IN GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION  
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
**HUMPHREY NEVILLE DICKINSON**  
(2ND LIEUT. 3RD ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT)  
AUTHOR OF "KEDDY" AND OTHER WORKS  
WHO FELL ON THE SOMME  
IN OCTOBER 1916

---

*"Ἀρνούνται ὁ ἄρετᾶς αἶνον μέγαν, ἀλλὰ τις ἀστῶν  
Τούσδ' ἐσίδων θνάσκειν πλάτω ὑπὲρ πατρίδος."*





## PREFACE

IF the writer of the following pages had been one of that constantly growing band who foresaw the early outbreak of a universal war in which the triumph or defeat of the principle of nationality was to be the dominating issue, his treatment of the subject would probably have been wanting in a certain boldness which perhaps now marks it, even if he had had the courage to enter upon it at all. It would have required more detachment than he is capable of to have used as a means of intellectual diversion, or even of earnest study, a theme which was so soon to be the argument and inspiration of political genius and military valour. But as a matter of fact this book was written as a whole before the war broke out, at a time, that is, when the vast majority of the English people had as little anticipation of war as they had of an invasion from the stellar spheres. And now that the war and its issues are compellingly before us, perhaps the very fact that these chapters were, for the most part, put together in an atmosphere necessarily detached from its passionate excitements, may make them more useful as an attempt to explain the origin and describe the growth of that spirit of national patriotism to which the war has given so glorious and terrible a consecration.

This indulgence in the personal note may, perhaps, be allowed to carry itself so far as a brief account of the circumstances in which the book came to be written and the purpose of the author in writing it.

Having almost unconsciously accepted, as part of the tradition in which he was educated, what the late Lord Acton, with his characteristic air of thin-lipped acrimony, calls "the whig principle of nationality," he found, when the principle was called in question, as it has frequently been during the last twenty years, that he had no very clear idea as to what nationality was;

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and he could only blindly and silently resent the assertions of those who sneered at nationality as a metaphysical fiction, and put in its place mere groups of economic inter-relationships, or organizations of Labour, or of Science, or of Literature, which claimed to be entirely independent of purely national organizations; or, what was least satisfactory of all, a vague "Cosmopolitan" sentiment which could find no footing in any actual phenomena, whether of history or the present day. The only importance of these confessions lies in the fact that they were not the mark of a singular state of mind, for, as Sir J. R. Seeley said thirty-five years ago, speaking of his fellow-countrymen in general, "We take no pains to conceive clearly or define precisely what we call a nationality."<sup>1</sup> And as the present writer was not peculiar in his ignorance, neither does he lay claim to any extraordinary merit in having made an attempt to remove from his own mind that vagueness of thought which, in the opinion of the distinguished author of *The Expansion of England*, affected us all alike. He hopes, however, that, as he has made the attempt, and, he thinks, has attained to a clear conception and precise definition of nationality, his results may be of service to those whose indignation, necessarily mute because unsupported by knowledge of the facts, has been stirred when they have heard those who claimed some acquaintance with the subject call in question what the vast majority of civilized people feel to be one of the most sacred and dominating inspirations in life.

When, therefore, under the influence of these indignant emotions, he began to examine the works of those who had already dealt with the subject, he found the field most conspicuously occupied by those who maintained that nationality was based on "race," and by those who, on the contrary, having disproved the validity of all racial explanations of nationality, claimed that, at the same time, they had annihilated nationality altogether. The protagonist of the first group is the German, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and the main-

<sup>1</sup> Seeley's *The Expansion of England* was first published in July 1883. The quotation in the text is on p. 220 of the first edition.



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stay of the opposing group is the Scotsman, Mr. J. M. Robertson, supported in his main contentions by the Englishman, Mr. Norman Angell. For the reasons detailed in the course of subsequent chapters the writer was unable to accept either of these positions; and he was driven, therefore, to find some other explanation than "race" for what he was still compelled to regard as the most pregnant fact of modern political evolution. He thinks that he has found it in what may be formally called the principle of "organic continuity of common interest," to the elucidation of which the constructive part of this book is devoted, but on which a few brief sentences may, perhaps, be permitted here.

The formula has three terms which require preliminary definition. First, *Interest*. By this is not meant interest in the purely personal or selfish sense. The interests of a man are everything in which he is interested: his physical, intellectual, moral and artistic powers and all their manifold activities in the sphere of human life. The *common interests* of a group of people are their common material, intellectual, moral and artistic possessions, their social institutions and their economic relations, and their common sympathy in the proper use of these in the world of experience. Community of interest in this wide and general sense is the basis of all social life, and, if nationality be a form of social life, community of interest must equally be the basis of national life. Secondly: there is not only *community* of interest, but *continuity* of interest. The forces which mould nationality, if there be any such thing as nationality, are of necessity historical forces, since every generation is the inheritor of the social tradition and culture of its predecessor, however much it may modify or improve the heritage before handing it down to its successor. Neither Rome nor any other nation was built in a day. National sympathy looks backward and forward as well as to the immediate present. The natural qualities possessed by all men, as men, are manifested quite differently in different communities, according to the special tradition or culture which has been gradually formed through generations of continuous national existence. But not only is nationality

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based on common interest; and on continuity of common interest: the continuity of interest is, thirdly, *organic*. That is to say, nationality, like every other evolutionary organism, has developed machinery for entering into relationships of action and passion with its environment; and, being a human organism, it is endowed, as part of that machinery, with intelligence, the last fine product of natural evolution, which is capable of diverting the lower forces of natural evolution to its own special human purposes. Under the pressure of surrounding phenomena, this organizing intelligence has developed a powerful and elaborate apparatus for the accomplishment of distinctively national ends. Nationality, therefore, is community of interest developed in course of time into a characteristic traditional culture which gradually creates for itself machinery, legislative, administrative and other, for effecting its ends in the world of human action. Nationality is organic continuity of common interest.

But an organism is not only an active phenomenon—it is capable not only of effecting its purposes, more or less successfully, in the external world—but it is the objective recipient of influences from the external world. The writer has not omitted, in its proper place, to deal with the possibility of a progressive national development in communities isolated from foreign influences; but he has not been able to ignore the fact that a main agent of national development, paradoxical as the statement may appear, is to be found in the operation of external causes; not as forces eliminating the national organism—for how in such a case could nationality exist?—but as moulding and being moulded by the national forces in a co-operative movement enriching and vivifying the genuine native tradition. The phrase which suggested itself to describe this process, “the commingling of atmospheres,” is, no doubt, clumsy enough, but perhaps fairly clear to most people; and the writer can think of no better. It is because Literature—that clear record of national culture and tendency—best exhibits the operation of this process of general national development, that the writer has devoted a considerable space to the story of

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national literature in our own country. Our literature, no less than other forms of our social evolution, would be deprived of much that we now regard as distinctively national if we could eliminate from its texture all those elements which the "commingling of atmospheres" has introduced into it from external sources.

Nationality, therefore, is organic continuity of common interest—the word "organic" being legitimately used to imply both "organism" and "organization"; an organism being the living instrument ("organ") of natural forces, whose action through it is not only influenced by the environment, but is capable also of organizing the environment to the more elastic and more certain satisfaction of the increasingly complicated requirements of the organism and the forces which it represents. In other words, the growth of nationality is an evolutionary process.

In order to demonstrate and illustrate the operation of this principle of sociological evolution, the writer first proceeds to examine the current popular views of national character and the evidence they supply as to the actual existence of that phenomenon; an examination naturally followed by an analysis of the more prominent scientific explanations of its origin and development. These investigations (Chapters I. and II.) lead to a provisional acceptance of the principle of organic continuity of common interest as an explanation of nationality and national character in preference to any of the racial theories propounded to the same end. This provisional explanation is supported by a critical examination of the contradictions and absurdities involved in the racial theories current in historical and political writers of the present day (Chapter III.), while Chapter IV. is devoted to a careful inquiry into the crucial case of the Jews, with special reference to the writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain. The ground being thus cleared by a demonstration of the fallacy of race as the basis of nationality, there follows an exposition of the principle of organic continuity of common interest, chiefly directed against writers like Mr. J. M. Robertson, who maintain that, with the disappearance of race as the operating cause of nationality, nationality



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itself disappears (Chapter V.). The principle, as thus maintained, is applied to an account of the origin and growth of our historic British nationality from the earliest times to the present day (Chapters VI.-X.). The next three chapters are designed with the same object, but lay special emphasis upon the "commingling of atmospheres" as illustrated by the modifications effected in the national tradition by the impulse of foreign influences, Chapter XI. applying the principle to the social and economic evolution of Britain from the Norman Conquest onwards, and Chapters XII. and XIII. illustrating its operation in the growth of our national literature. The two concluding Chapters deal with some pressing modern questions in the light of the principle previously expounded, such as the relationship of nationality to Peace and War, and to the movement for the establishment of a League of Nations. It is here suggested that War will be made impossible, and universal and lasting Peace secured, not by the sudden imposition of hastily manufactured machinery, but by the gradual extension from national life to international life of that principle of organic community of interest which has already established harmony within the separate national boundaries.

It is not, of course, pretended that the author's analysis accounts for all the influences, domestic and foreign, which have contributed to produce and enrich our national life. Political, social and literary influences, which have been the more immediate fields of the writer's exposition, do not, in the usual restricted sense of these words, cover the whole ground; and even in working his special field he is aware of large omissions. But the theme is really inexhaustible; and if the writer's view be sound, it is sufficiently important to evoke the interest of workers in other fields of national activity: in Religion, Music, Painting, Architecture, Economics, Science, Education, Drama; indeed, in every sphere of social thought and practice.

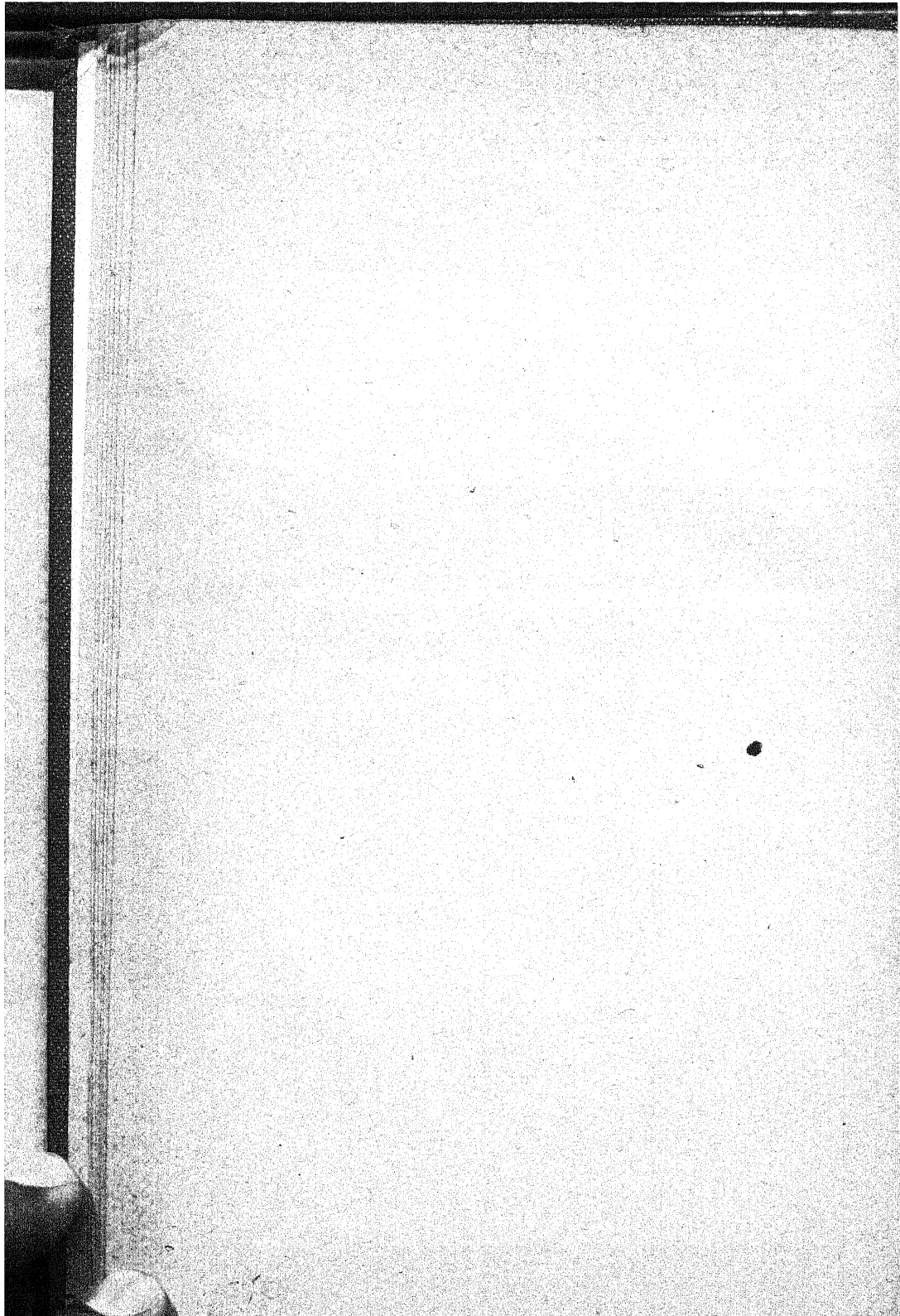
Although in carrying out his necessarily limited task the writer has had to tell over again some oft-told episodes of our national life, he is too conscious of the essential splendour of his theme to make any pretence

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that he has risen to the height of his argument. He who can stumble along well enough by the aid of pedestrian prose when the path is plain and the landscape clear, would willingly leave to those endowed with "the vision and the faculty divine" the arduous duty of pathing the intricate and ever-mounting ways which cross and recross in apparently aimless confusion the glorious panorama of our national history. The epic quality of the tale of English nationality can only be celebrated in some such "glorious and lofty hymn" as Milton's mind proposed to herself "in the spacious circuits of her musing"; but a call to humbler work finds a ready response in those who really love England, and the writer will be satisfied if he is able to show that the phenomena of our development as a national entity, multitudinous as they are and variegated, are the harmonious expression of a continuous tradition which unites by the sacred bond of a common devotion to England the famous or forgotten millions of her unnumbered generations.

JOHN OAKESMITH

*Hounslow,  
May 1919.*





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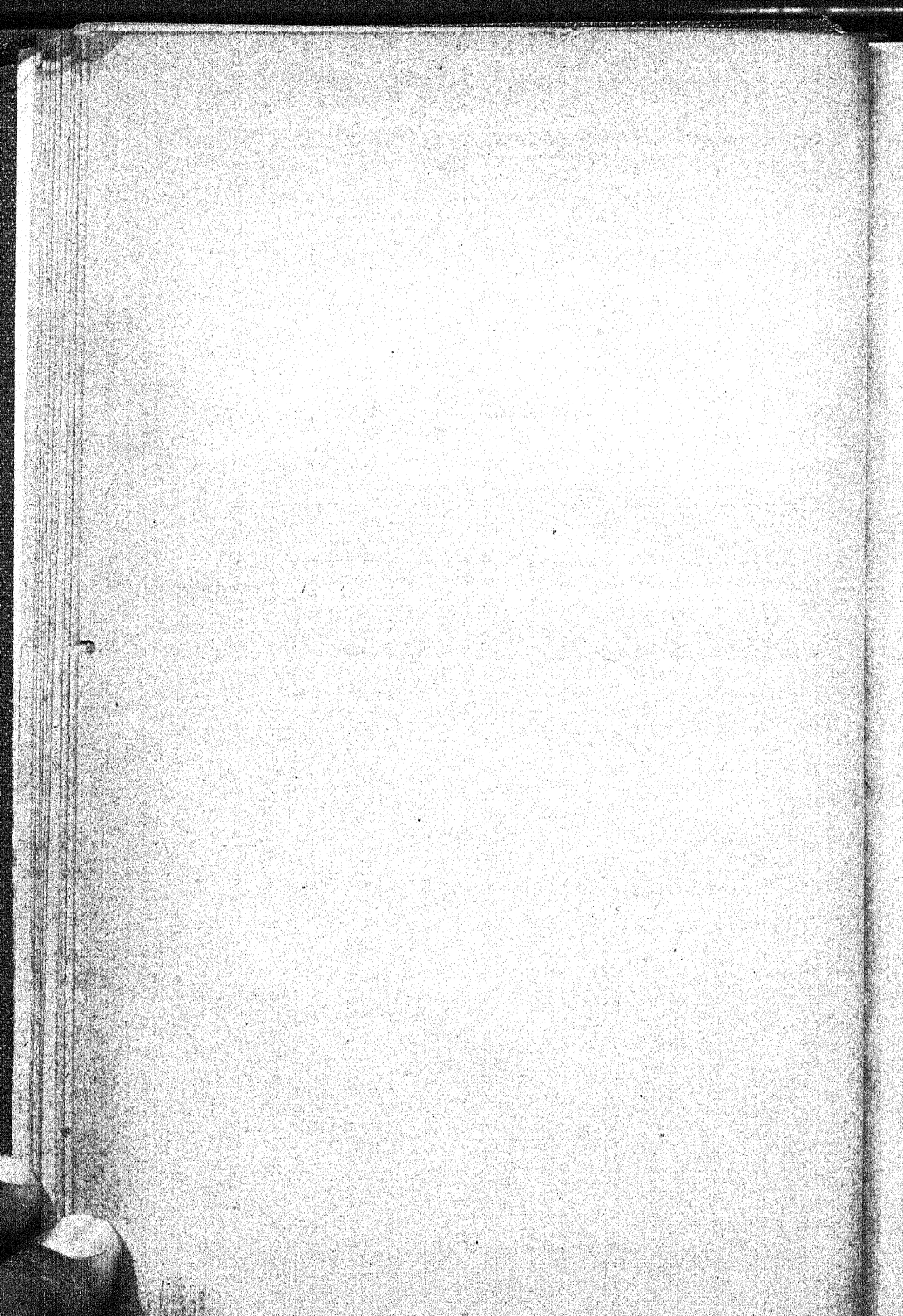
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## CHAPTER I

General Belief in the Existence of national Character: No equally general Agreement as to the Character of any particular Nation—The View that national Character is unchangeable from Age to Age—The View that it summarizes the separate Characters of all the individual Persons in the Nation—The "Soul" of a People: the Nation as "Crowd"—Latent Elements of Character—Complexity of the Subject.

WALKING along the low-lying northern shore of the Solent upon the eve of a great Naval Review the writer was joined by a casual stranger, his manner indicating an eagerness to express the feelings inspired in him by the sight of the hundred ships-of-war whose grey shapes at that moment chequered the many-twinkling smile of Ocean with a threatening frown. The stranger found many æsthetic and other charms in the scene, but what chiefly moved his rapture was the relationship he conceived to exist between the assembled fleet and the British national character. "Are they not thoroughly and typically English?" he exclaimed—"a sort of colossal 'John Bull, his mark'?" It would have been easy to score the cheap sarcasm of inquiring to what extent the authenticity of the national signature was affected by the complimentary presence of a considerable number of men-of-war of various nationalities other than British. The incident, however, is recalled because it illustrates the popular view of what is described as the "English National Character." This is generally thought to be something specific and well defined, something that is unmistakably manifest in all the work performed by the English People, so that when you use the words "the English National Character" you employ an expression with an almost scientifically precise connotation, carrying clear and well-established ideas into the mind of the hearer, and serving to mark off the "English National Character" from the national character of any other

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people under the sun. No matter how much we may find individual Englishmen differing from each other in all the constituent elements of character; no matter how much we may find individual Frenchmen or Germans approaching, nay, excelling, individual Englishmen in the characteristics traditionally ascribed to the English; our conception of the distinct national character of our own people remains undisturbed.

The principle, moreover, has subtle ramifications and refinements which discriminate between the general characters of different sections of the same national aggregate. The Scot has his "national" character; the Irishman has his; and what Englishman is deficient in eloquence to describe either?—an eloquence spurred by the knowledge that he, too, is the object of similar amiable generalities on the part of the other members of the British group.

Differences of still narrower local reach are also made the basis of discriminating generalizations. Popular phraseology surrounds the Yorkshireman, the East Anglian, the Devonian and the Cockney each with his own separate atmosphere of local character, and there are even those who claim to distinguish the "Man of Kent" from the "Kentish Man." And not only do these provincial distinctions fall easily under the broad generalization which assigns to the Southron characteristics described as typically "English," but it is popularly felt that even the wider differentiations between Englishman, Scotsman, and Irishman must, if only for very politeness' sake, be included in the all-embracing conception of the "English National Character," a feeling which is evident in the growing use of the term "British" where we have previously been content with "English."

The fact that these beliefs are popular and widespread is no reason for regarding them as entirely fallacious, any more than the fact that they are largely corroborated by scientists and philosophers is a reason for accepting them as entirely sound. But be that as it may, we cannot deny that anthropologists, ethnologists, sociologists, and historians of both the picturesque and the philosophical schools, all alike recognize differences of national character as giving meaning and unity to national history; as

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he style is the man, so the character is the nation. What would be the value of innumerable books like Emerson's *English Traits*, or Taine's *History of English Literature*, if their descriptions of our national character could be applied with equal force to that of the French? How many sarcasms would be blunted! how many eulogies would wither! if they could be passed on to any of our national neighbours without alteration, as, of course, they could be were there no differences of national character between our neighbours and ourselves. The manifold attempts made from the racial point of view to cast light upon the character and history of modern communities by anthropologists in measuring Piltdown and Galley Hill skulls and in reconstructing Neanderthal and Engis skeletons; by ethnologists in calculating the intelligence and depicting the civilization of Neolithic men from the nature of the tools they have left behind them; by specializing historians who have devoted a lifetime of research to the study of national origins—all these and the thousands of volumes in which they are recorded would form a most melancholy monument of human ignorance and ineptitude were there no foundation for the present popular and scientific belief in the existence of differences of national character. How many happy generalizations would prove meaningless! how many scientific conclusions baseless! how many historical narratives pointless! Were there no such thing as national character it would be necessary to revise all our conceptions of human development, to rewrite all our histories of human progress! Just as an experience undergone by an individual person unfolds its most important meaning when regarded as an indication of the character of which it is the outcome, and of the relationship in which that character stands to the other characters operating in the same sphere, just so a national event is endowed with its richest significance when it is looked upon as interpreting those special forces which are described, alike in popular and in scientific diction, as constituting national character.

The almost universal claim that national character is a real and ineluctable fact has not, however, resulted in any equally general recognition of the ultimate nature



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of the difference in any given set of comparable instances, nor even in any agreement as to the broad lines in which the difference should be stated. The primeval prejudice against the stranger, rooted as it is in a fixed, inarguable conviction that the native is the superior creation, is still the chief obstacle, existing both in the popular and in the scientific mind, to an impartial consideration of the question. This drives us into those comparisons which are none the less odious for being erroneous in theory and dangerous in practice, and for encouraging those false conceptions which issue in acts of international hostility. Even in minds less liable to prejudice than the majority, we often find the scientific form of an opinion to be merely a stately mantle for the old historic hatreds. It is a remarkable and intensely melancholy fact that the national animosity of the French and the Germans is reflected in the conclusions respectively arrived at by French and German scientists as to the ethnological value of the skeletons of prehistoric European man. The chief interest (we are told) that attaches to the Engis skull of the repulsive "Canstadt" type, is that French anthropologists consider the savages to whom they belonged "to be the direct ancestors of their hereditary enemies the Germans, while German anthropologists assert that the Teutons are the only lineal descendants of the noble Aryan race."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Grant Allen, to take another example, says that "the Teutonic blood differentiates our somewhat slow and steady character from the more logical, but volatile and unstable Gaul, the Celtic blood differentiates it from the far-slower, heavier, and less quick or less imaginative Teutons of Germany or Scandinavia."<sup>2</sup> Leaving aside, for the present, the question of blood or race as affecting character, let us ask whether these various epithets, as applied in this comparative way to Celt and Teuton, to Gaul and Anglo-Saxon, express scientific realities, or are merely shapes of national vanity masquerading as science. Will the Gaul admit our general charge of volatility and

<sup>1</sup> *The Origin of the Aryans*, by Isaac Taylor (Walter Scott: "Contemporary Science" Series), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Britain*, by Grant Allen, B.A. (S.P.C.K., 1884), p. 229.

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instability with the same readiness as he admits the law of gravity or the rotundity of the earth's surface? Even if he admits it, will he admit it as discriminating between ourselves and his own compatriots? Are not volatility and instability essential elements in that quality of "perfidy" which he has so often hissed at us from across the Straits of Dover? Did not Immanuel Kant say that we English were a people of whim, long before Mr. G. B. Shaw transferred that particular cap from the head of the typical Irishman to that of the typical Englishman? Did not Milton himself suggest that the "*fickleness* which is attributed to us" might be corrected by "good education and acquire wisdom"?<sup>1</sup> And the German in general, Prussian or Saxon, Bavarian or Austrian, will he agree that he is less quick and less imaginative than we are? It is a perpetual source of patriotic wonder to the intelligent German that so dull and unimaginative a race as he thinks we are ever produced a Shakespeare, whom he claims, through the mouth of Goethe and others, to appreciate better than we do ourselves, mingling some earnest in the jest with which he appropriates our great poet as "*unser Shakespeare*."<sup>2</sup> And what are we to say of Grant Allen's indiscriminate confounding, in one contemptuous generalization, of the Teutons of Germany with those of Scandinavia? The Danes might possibly admit the charge as regards Swedes and Norwegians, just as Norwegians might admit it as regards Swedes and Danes, or Swedes as regards Danes and Norwegians; so general are these patriotic comparisons between nation and nation. But the Norwegian himself, when speaking through the detached personality of an American University professor, discerns such marked differences of national character between the peoples of Sweden and Norway

<sup>1</sup> Milton, "A Free Commonwealth," *Prose of Milton*, p. 144 (Scott Library).

<sup>2</sup> Goethe, *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Book XI. "Shakespeare ist von den Deutschen mehr, als von allen anderen Nationen, ja vielleicht mehr, als von seiner eigenen, erkannt." Cf. Grillparzer's quotation from Gervinus' *History of German Poetical Literature* and his emphatic comment thereon. "Haben ja die Engländer selbst, ihrem Shakespeare sein volles Recht zu thun, uns überlassen." "Du lieber Himmel!" says Grillparzer (Cotta edition, Vol. XVIII. p. 24).

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as to render their political union an impossibility—a statement made some years before the political separation of the two countries in 1906. The same writer can also discriminate the Danes from the two other Scandian peoples, notwithstanding their sharing in the comprehensive dulness of the Teuton blood—"There is something soft and emotional in the character of the Danes which distinguishes them from their Norwegian and Swedish kinsmen, an easily flowing lyrical vein which imparts a winning warmth and cordiality to their demeanour."<sup>1</sup> And as for the transformations effected upon, the original *furor Teutonicus* by its imprisonment in the narrow Norwegian valleys, several writers have made them the theme of interesting and not entirely useless studies.<sup>2</sup> The fact of the matter is, that Gaul and Briton, Teuton and Scandinavian, Celt and Saxon alike maintain the existence of specific differences of national character, while each equally denying the truth of the estimates which his neighbours have formed of his own, and each alike forming his own estimates of the characters of his different neighbours.

It is a consoling reflection, however, that differences of opinion as to the nature of any phenomenon do not annihilate the phenomenon itself, serving rather to corroborate the belief in its existence, as being based upon observations made from many independent points of view. And even if it should prove, after patient and thorough investigation, that the phenomenon only exists as a general hallucination, as happened in the case of witchcraft, a knowledge of the reasons upon which the error is founded will probably be as fruitful in practical results, if only of confession and avoidance, as if an actual fact had been compelled to surrender its secret. The assumption, therefore, that the general belief in the existence of national character is not without foundation in reality, may usefully be made the starting-point of an

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Scandinavian Literature*, by Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen (London: David Nutt, 1895).

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* see *Germanic Origins: a Study in Primitive Culture*, by Francis B. Gummere, PH.D. (London: David Nutt, 1892). "Whenever we wish to see any Germanic trait in its most exaggerated form we look to Scandinavia."



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investigation into the meaning and implications of the phrase. And if the progress of the search demonstrates the falsity of the initial assumption, the inquirer will have the satisfaction of exposing an error, if not of establishing a truth.

Assuming, therefore, the provisional validity of the prevalent generalization, let us next endeavour to ascertain what it means when applied to the particular case of the English national character, an example whose choice needs no apology in an Englishman. Perhaps we may be allowed to hope that an inquiry into what the expression means will enable us, by the way, to ascertain what it ought to mean.

Among Englishmen, then, there is prevalent an impression that what Grant Allen and others have called the "Anglo-Saxon Character" has been a consistent and homogeneous phenomenon all through the recorded history of the English People; that what is known as the original "Anglo-Saxon Stock," although it may have encountered the shock or seduction of various foreign influences during its occupation of the British Islands, has yet been able to mould all these to its own native purposes, has assimilated them all to its own structure, and has arisen triumphantly supreme over them all in the conservation of its own primeval qualities. Even the great irruption of the Norman elements is regarded as having had little effect upon the solid English material which had found an immovable habitation here before that insolent usurpation took place. In Russell Lowell's intimate phrase, it was but the working of "the Norman yeast upon the home-baked Saxon loaf," bringing no fundamental transformation of material, but only adding a little in the way of ornamental delicacy and niceness.<sup>1</sup> And this view dominates the writers of English History with an almost exclusive prepossession. Everywhere is exhibited the tendency to assert that, through all the changes and the chances of our national career, a certain well-defined type of character, which showed itself at the very outset, has been transmitted by blood, and has remained practically unaltered from the time of *Beowulf*

<sup>1</sup> See Lowell's Essay on "Chaucer," in *My Study Windows* (Camelot Classics, 1886), p. 227.

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to the time of Browning, from Alfred the Great to Mr. Lloyd George.<sup>1</sup>

And this generalization of the historians, which does not pretend to have been obtained as the result of any scientific inquiry into causes, but to be merely a statement of broad social and political phenomena, appears to receive corroboration from the more recent specialists in the study of racial tendencies. We reserve for a later chapter some discussion of the more important results of such study. At present we merely mention a few representative scientific or philosophic thinkers who can be quoted in apparent support of the picturesque descriptions of English historians and novelists. M. Gustave Le Bon, for example, expressly maintains that every nation possesses a character which was fixed for it at some undated period, which undergoes no fundamental change from generation to generation, and which is called by a theological analogy the "soul of the people." To quote M. Le Bon: this soul "possesses fundamental characteristics as immutable as the anatomical characteristics of an animal species."—"In all the manifestations of the life of a people we always find the unchangeable soul of the race weaving itself its own destiny."<sup>2</sup>

A variation of this view is current in Germany, where it has received philosophical form in the writings of the jurist von Ihering, whose brilliant work on the *Evolution of the Aryan* is unfortunately only a fragment.<sup>3</sup> His position is summed up in the pregnant phrase, "the soil is the nation," by which he means that the national characters of the various historical peoples were originally the product of their geographical environment. He goes on to maintain, however, that the first formation of national character under the influence of the environment is final, decisive, and unchangeable, being hence-

<sup>1</sup> Morley, *English Writers*. Introduction: "In the Literature of any people we perceive under all contrasts of form produced by variable social influences the one national character from first to last."

<sup>2</sup> *The Psychology of Peoples*, by Gustave Le Bon (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), see pp. 19 and 130.

<sup>3</sup> *The Evolution of the Aryan*, by Rudolph von Ihering. Translated from the German by A. Drucker, M.P. (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1897).

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forward transmitted by heredity. As he asserts that the description which Tacitus gives of the Germans holds good in its essential points for all their "descendants," he could clearly be quoted in support of the view that the Anglo-Saxon character was decisively formed before the Teutonic invasion of England, and has been transmitted from those early times, fundamentally unaltered, to the present inhabitants of these Islands. And lastly, for the present, we have Mr. Cyril Burt, the extremely able lecturer in Experimental Psychology in the University of Liverpool, arguing with great cogency and clearness that, although "environment may explain the difference in different societies of the traditional mental contents, heredity remains indispensable to explain the differences in mental capacities."—"These differences," he adds, "are the more fundamental. Mental inheritance... rules the destiny of nations."<sup>1</sup>

It would, of course, demand the most patient and prolonged analysis of the various stages of our national development, as unrolled upon the pages of history, to ascertain whether the qualities which marked the Anglo-Saxon "Race" on its earliest appearance have undergone any radical transformation throughout the course of subsequent ages. But one thing even a cursory, if careful, glance makes clear: and this is, that if national character is what it is understood to be in the popular sense of the term, there can be no doubt that very striking changes have from time to time been manifested in the forms of its expression. The national character in the popular sense is generally found to be merely a rough symbol for certain special characteristics which have come to the front at particular times and seasons. During the political sway of Puritanism, for example, certain particular features played a dominating part in the social and general movements of the day, and stamped the so-called "national character" of that epoch. But the "national character" was different in the age of Cromwell from what it was in the days of Elizabeth: from both these it differed in the Restoration Age: and where are the common factors of the "national

<sup>1</sup> "The Inheritance of Mental Characters," by Cyril Burt, M.A. *Eugenics Review*, July 1912.



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character" in the age of Anne and the age of George the Fifth?

"Qui dabat olim  
Imperium, fasces, legiones, omnia, nunc se  
Continet, atque duas tantum res anxius optat,  
Panem et Circenses."<sup>1</sup>

What modern Englishman of average taste and morals would find himself at home under the first two Georges as that age is depicted, for example, by Thackeray? The fact is that national character, in the popular acceptance of the term, has undergone great modifications from generation to generation, and it is quite impossible to generalize all these changes and sum them up in one phrase as the historical national character of Englishmen. In the sixteenth century the English had the European reputation of being lazy. The severest critic of British faults hardly includes lack of energy among them to-day. Where is now the "whim," the "capricious originality," with which Kant endowed us at the end of the eighteenth century? "The reputation," says Mr. C. H. Pearson, "which the Englishman of Great Britain enjoyed has now been in great measure transferred to the Anglo-American. The original race has grown 'bulbous, heavy-witted, material,' as Hawthorne cynically puts it; is careful of its bank-balance and of the proprieties; is weighted with an ever-present sense of responsibilities." And, again quotes Mr. Pearson: "'The English,' says Holberg, 'as soon as they hear of anything they are not familiar with, take hold of it at once, examine it, accept it, and teach it publicly.'"<sup>2</sup> This accessibility to new ideas has not been a constant element of our national character.

Some students there are who maintain that these changes in the national character are actually marked by a corresponding change in the "national" face. The anonymous author of a little book on *Character in the Face* has some suggestive remarks on this subject.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal, X. 79-81.—This is a pre-war quotation; but the contrast is always repeating itself.

<sup>2</sup> *National Life and Character, a Forecast*, by Charles H. Pearson (Macmillan & Co., 1894), pp. 104-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Character in the Face: Our Looks and What They Mean* (Chapman & Hall, 1893).

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"The average Elizabethan head of poets, philosophers, and statesmen is oval, well-made, and with a wide, well-shaped forehead. But after the Revolution of 1688 the national head will be found to deteriorate. It begins to get round, fleshy, and the jaws enlarge as in the lower types of humanity. And in the sensual times of the Georges the English 'national' head has been thus described: 'The shape of the head was an irregular round, larger at the bottom than at the top; the brow thick, low, and sloping backward; the nose, coarse and long; the mouth fleshy, lax, ponderous, and earthy. When the countenance was not of this description it was poor, mean, and sharp.' A really fine head was scarcely to be met with, a physiognomical degeneration continuing till after the French Revolution. At present the head is looked upon as reverting to the higher Elizabethan type." Craniology, of course, from its point of view, fixes an adamantine bar against the possibility of such rapid racial changes of occipital structure as are here recounted; while the superficial signs of coarse living or high thinking, as evident in the mouth or nose or cheeks of the subject, point to the long result of individual habits and not to racial qualities. But the writer well illustrates the view that different intellectual and moral traits have been nationally prominent at different periods of our national history.

The fact appears to be that the impression which historians give of our national character at any particular epoch is not a complete impression even for that epoch; a statement which may be made without suggesting that a complete impression is easy, or even possible. The qualities which have been taken into account in arriving at the generalized national character, even when the writer is not merely repeating a shibboleth or worshipping a fetish, have commonly been those which the course of social or political events has brought prominently upon the historical stage. It is impossible, for example, to believe that the "national character" of Englishmen under the Puritan régime covered the whole of the nation. Real goodness—and who would deny real, if illiberal, goodness to the average Puritan?—does not become vice when the external conditions make it easier

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to be vicious than to be virtuous. The licentiousness of the Restoration was inherent in a part of the nation even under the Puritans, and was only awaiting a favourable social régime to show itself openly. The "Nazarene abstinence" of the Puritan was not eliminated from the national character when Charles and his Court returned to give the dominant note to English society, any more than the English language at the same period ceased to be capable of dignity and splendour because Dryden made it capable of lucidity and precision. The goodness and the piety were hiding in shy seclusion in quiet families at Chalfont and in the City of London; but the historian has fixed his impression of the temporary national character by the orgies of Chelsea and Whitehall, just as for the previous period he has fixed it by the prayer meetings at Windsor Castle and the filling of State papers with texts from the Old Testament.

Similarly, it would not be difficult to show that the qualities combined in the popular estimate of the Elizabethan Englishman were qualities exhibited by a limited number of distinguished people whose birth, or social standing, or possession of purely individual characteristics, enabled them to play a prominent part in the great events of their epoch, and to stamp their own qualities upon its record. The qualities displayed by the common million, which are left out of consideration because they have not lent themselves to picturesque illumination—*carant quia vate sacro*—should be brought into proper relief as elements of the national character, if it be true that all the separate members of the community participate in its national character.

If, therefore, we were to combine into one broad generalization all the descriptions given by historians of the character exhibited by the nation at successive periods of its development, we should be far from obtaining that correct view of national character which seems promised by the common use of the term, and in doing so we should, at any rate, have to jettison the popular historical notion that the character of our people has remained unchanged from the earliest to the latest day. The temporary "national characters" which have successively shown themselves upon the stage of history



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prove each of them to be simply a rough generalization, or perhaps even only an enumeration, of the characteristics prominently exhibited by prominent personages at particular periods of our history. Whether or not these characteristics of individual personages have a representative or symbolic value is a matter for subsequent inquiry.<sup>1</sup> At present we merely note that national characteristics have been so very different at different periods that it is impossible to sum up all the variations in one comprehensive phrase. How can we find a common expression for the empurpled splendour of the Elizabethan age and the plebeian smugness of the mid-Victorian epoch? for the conventicular primness of the Cromwellian Puritan and the brothel-haunting lubricity of the Restoration courtier? for the urbanity and spiritual refinement which, in some eyes, marked the England of the fifteenth century and the "restless industry and practical talent" of the century of manufactures?<sup>2</sup> How embrace in one single descriptive expression self-denial and selfishness, asceticism and luxury, bravery and cowardice, loyalty and treason? If one could find such an expression it would have less distinctiveness than the term "cloth" applied alike to cloth-of-gold, purple and fine linen, fustian and shoddy.

Nor is the difficulty much lessened when, dropping the attempt to imprison in a phrase the Lucretian torch race of the generations of our history, we confine our efforts to answering the question, whether our people in any one generation have displayed a common character which can be tersely hit off in a general phrase. Here, too, we find ourselves equally unable to deal with the matter from a scientific standpoint. If it be true, as the popular idea maintains, that national character is a generalization of all the physical, intellectual and moral qualities of the various individual persons composing the community,<sup>3</sup> how can we accurately phrase a general-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters XII. and XIII. (Chaucer and Spenser).

<sup>2</sup> Seeley, *Expansion of England*, p. 85 (1883).

<sup>3</sup> "The British Character is, so to speak, the generalized manifestation of the characters of the English, Scottish and Welsh peoples, and, descending the scale, of the characters of the inhabitants of every district, and finally of every man."—Dr. Rice Holmes: *Ancient Britain*, p. 457.

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ization involving a consideration of particulars so numerous and so variable? A scientifically exact terminology is the first necessity for propounding an accurate scientific theory, and who shall provide a language at once so copious, delicate and subtle as to suggest fully all the different qualities shown by all the separate members of the community, and all the different shades and gradations of the same quality as differently exhibited by those who possess it? Plato has given us to know that no man's courage is the same as any other man's courage,<sup>1</sup> if we were not aware that even in the less subtly delicate sphere of physical qualities Nature never exactly copies her own handiwork. If we could assert that every member of a community possessed courage, would it convey an exact scientific verity to say that the communal character was marked by courage? It is almost a truism to say that an assemblage of people often displays qualities different from those that mark its individual members. But history has left us no record of a community of which all the members were courageous—those communities most famous for their courage having promulgated the severest penalties against the coward; and it would be a matter for the most critical calculation to decide how far the cowardice of the cowards acts as a diminution of the general character for courage, and many fine and delicate deductions would have to be made before we could find, if ever we could find, a scientifically phrased generalization to express the final result. The question, moreover, is not one of a single quality merely, but of many different qualities exhibiting themselves differently in some millions of people, and any statement of the character of these people in their national aspect cannot pretend to anything like scientific accuracy. These considerations would appear to suggest that any claim to scientific certitude on this infinitely complicated subject must be scrutinized with even more suspicion than the manifestly haphazard guesses of the multitude.

Further, even if we were able to summarize the different characters of a few millions of individuals into a single descriptive phrase, it would by no means follow that we had expressed their character as a community.

<sup>1</sup> Plato : *Laches*.

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Without following M. Gustave Le Bon into all his fantastic lucubrations on the Crowd, we can agree with him, and with the many writers who have previously made the same remark, that when a crowd of persons acts as a crowd it exhibits characteristics alien from those ever exhibited by the separate items composing it.<sup>1</sup> The character of a crowd is not a generalization of the characters of its component units; and he who would foretell the behaviour of even a small group of persons from his knowledge of the individual characters of its members would probably find himself discredited as a prophet after the first attempt. And yet it seems not unlikely that a crowd has a character of its own, an accurate knowledge of which would find its forecasts of the crowd's action justified by the event. This consideration casts suspicion upon the lucubrations of the "Leviathan" school of social philosophy, who looked upon the community as a sort of gigantic man, and drew elaborate pseudo-scientific parallels between the various functions of the social organism and the physical and mental structure of the individual human being. This reflection also suggests that as a crowd may be a phenomenon *sui generis*, having its own laws, and exhibiting its activities in a manner which cannot be calculated except by a special study of these laws, so it is possible that we may find a hint towards the true meaning of "national character" in regarding that larger crowd, the community or the nation, as a phenomenon *sui generis*, exhibiting its activities in a manner peculiar to itself, and totally dissimilar from the manner in which any individual member of the community or nation exhibits his or her activities. This, however, is a subject for investigation when the difficulties of the general question have been sufficiently explored.

Meanwhile, there is another preliminary difficulty which forces itself upon the attention of those who would inquire into the phenomena of national character: a difficulty associated with the not uncommon use of the word "character" to imply less what a man does than what he is, to indicate those latent uniformities of his nature

<sup>1</sup> *The Crowd, a Study of the Popular Mind*, by Gustave Le Bon (London: T. Fisher Unwin).



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which give harmony to his most divergent actions, welding truth and falsehood, bravery and cowardice, rashness and prudence into one coherent whole; and often not requiring the test of action before it makes its existence known to the observer. This conception of character is part of our common intellectual possession to-day mainly owing to the influence of Emerson, into the very web of whose philosophy it is inextricably woven. "O Iole!" he quotes, "how did you know that Hercules was a god?"—"Because I was content the moment my eyes fell on him. When I beheld Theseus, I desired that I might see him offer battle, or at least guide his horses in the chariot race; but Hercules did not wait for a contest; he conquered whether he stood, or walked, or sat, or whatever thing he did."<sup>1</sup> In Chatham "there was something finer than anything which he said." The facts about Mirabeau "do not justify Carlyle's estimate of his genius," but Emerson accepts that estimate in spite of the "facts." Plutarch's heroes "do not in the record of facts equal their fame": the facts are an insignificant indication of the latent splendours of whose existence we are, nevertheless, convinced beyond question. Nor is it only the great and eminent personages of the world's history who have possessed this quality. We all know men in our daily lives of business or pleasure who are greater than anything the masters of this world can find for them to do; who are silent reservoirs of force and energy; whom instinctively we feel we could trust to guide us in any emergency requiring real leadership, and not merely the specious machinations of the interested schemer; who need none of the quotidian rewards or cheap "honours" of life to vindicate the estimate we form of them. Galton, in a well-known passage, says of the individual human being that "there is in him a vastly larger number of capabilities than ever find expression, and for every patent element there are countless latent

<sup>1</sup> Emerson's "Essays," *Character* (near the beginning), "He quotes." Yes, but from where? Dr. Stanton Coit writes, in reply to the author's suggestion that Emerson was quoting from himself, "I can't think that even an American could have faked the passage, but I confess it sounds astonishingly like Emerson himself."

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ones.”<sup>1</sup> And elsewhere he extends the observation to the national sphere. “Different aspects of the multifarious character of man respond to different calls from without, so that the same individual, and much more the same race, may behave very differently at different epochs.”—“The same nation,” he adds, “may be seized by a military fervour at one period and by a commercial one at another; they may be humbly submissive to a monarch, or they may become atrocious republicans. The love of art, gaiety, adventure, science, religion, may be severally paramount at different times.”<sup>2</sup> And, as we have already suggested, the historians have seized upon the paramount passion of the period, or of the most notorious or distinguished people during that period, to express the national character for the time being, without considering in what relationship the paramount passion, the patent tendency, stood to the latent qualities of the national disposition, and without inquiring whether the successive apparent changes of character did not spring from some uniform principle giving harmony and consistency to the most flagrant diversities. From this point of view it would seem that we should look to find the character of a nation, not so much in the comparatively restricted sphere of its actual achievements, as in a consideration of what it were capable of achieving were all its latent powers called into action. This, at any rate, is a noble hypothesis, placing no limit to the possibilities of national development, whether in the physical, intellectual, or moral sphere. At present, however, we only mention the suggestion as among the considerations necessarily complicating a question which has too often been regarded as one of the very simplest, playthings of the picturesque historian.

Such, then, are some of the difficulties which face us in starting an inquiry into the origin and development of

<sup>1</sup> Galton, *Hereditary Genius* (Macmillan, 1892), p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> Galton, *Human Faculty* (Dent's "Everyman's Library" edition), pp. 128-9. Cf. Dr. George Brandes: "The national character manifests itself quite differently in different times."—*Poland: a Study of the Land, People, and Literature*, by George Brandes, p. 239 (Wm. Heinemann, 1903).

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national character, difficulties which, we have suggested, are largely due to the extreme variety and complexity of the facts themselves, a variety and complexity which have hitherto been insufficiently recognized. It has, perhaps, been too readily thought that the problem of national character was solved when a bare enumeration of certain qualities as exhibited on the national stage has been arrived at; whereas it is clear that character consists less in the enumeration of single qualities than in the relationship into which such qualities in their totality enter with the facts of their environment. This relationship may, as we have already hinted, be either express or implied, since character may be none the less a real power because it is not forever restlessly bestirring itself in the field of phenomena, but may remain unmoved upon the consciousness of its own dynamic possibilities. But whether express or implied, the relationship is there, and whether active or passive, overtly displayed or secretly hinted, must constitute our sole means of ascertaining the nature of the qualities which constitute character. If, according to Goethe's poetical discrimination between "character" and "talent," the former is shaped by the forces of the stream of mundane life, while the latter is the product of a calm detachment from activity, it is not necessary to be constantly struggling against the current of life in order to prove that we are not mere persons of talent.<sup>1</sup> But the stream is here, and we are here; we are part of the stream; and whether we struggle or are still we show what we are made of. Thomas à Kempis has "character" as well as Marcus Aurelius; Montaigne as well as Napoleon; St. John as well as St. Peter; and no mere enumeration of separate qualities will, in any one of these examples, expose the secret of personality. Character can only be finally studied in the relationship which personality assumes towards environment; and such relationship is not necessarily active, character being potentiality of action, whether the potentiality be energized or left in a latent condition.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe, *Torquato Tasso*, Act I, Sc. ii—

"Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,  
Sich ein Charakter, in dem Strom der Welt."



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This is a consideration which should not be overlooked in any endeavour to probe the secret of character, whether personal or national, and, adding it to the other difficulties which confront our inquiry, we proceed to give that closer analysis promised of the more important theories which have been formed to explain the origin and development of character in communities.

## CHAPTER II

Current Theories as to the Origin and Development of national Character—The "Geographical" and "Hereditarian" Schools—M. Gustave Le Bon and his Theory of the "Unalterable National Soul"—Von Ihering: National Character first formed by geographical Influences, then transmitted by Heredity—Canon Isaac Taylor: the Characters of European Nationalities already formed in the primitive Races from which they sprang—Ratzel: Differences of national Character entirely due to the Operation of geographical Influences—Professor Cyril Burt: Transmission of mental Qualities by Heredity—Conclusion: National Character the Product of Environment, and not of "racial" Heredity.

THEORIES of national character claim to be either geographical or hereditarian, but, notwithstanding the scientific precision affected by those who use these terms, it is found that no theory falls purely under one or the other definition, but that all, to a greater or less degree, contain elements of both descriptions.

First, at any rate in popular vogue, comes the view which is at once vaguely and tenaciously held by the vast majority of civilized people, which has received in England the emphatic support of Lord Acton, but which has taken its most appropriate literary shape in the writings of M. Gustave Le Bon.<sup>1</sup> This is the theory which has borrowed from theology the highly con-

<sup>1</sup> Le Bon, *Psychology of Peoples*, Chap. I. Cf. Lord Acton: "For the same race of men preserves its character, not only in every region of the world, but in every period of history, in spite of moral as well as physical influences. Were not the Semitic races everywhere and always monotheists? whilst Japhetic nations, from Hindostan to Scandinavia, were originally pantheists or polytheists."—*Historical Essays and Studies* (Macmillan, 1907), p. 341. The fact that Lord Acton evidently does not appreciate the change of position involved in the transition from "everywhere and always" in the case of the Semites, to "originally," in that of the Japhetic nations, is delightfully illustrative of the confusion affecting the clearest minds under the influence of the racial fallacy. Besides, what is the resemblance between pantheism and polytheism that they should necessarily be the result of an identical racial endowment?

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troversial term "soul" as the best means of expressing what is meant by the character of a nation. From this "soul," itself unchanging and unchangeable, as constant in its immaterial qualities as an animal species in its anatomical characteristics, have sprung "the various elements of which a civilization is composed."—"In all the manifestations of the life of a people we always find the unchangeable soul of the race itself weaving its own destiny." This "soul" is composed of certain "sentiments," such as perseverance, energy, power of self-control and morality, intelligence being expressly excluded from the list of these soul-forming sentiments and from any operative power over their action or development. The "character," we are told, and not the intelligence, of a people determines its historical evolution. "Peoples may do at a pinch without an intellectual *élite*, but not without a certain level of character."<sup>1</sup>—"The fundamental factor in the fall of nations is always found to be a change in their mental constitution resulting from the deterioration of their character. I cannot call to mind a single people that has disappeared in consequence of the deterioration of its intelligence." It is "character," thus divorced from intelligence, which constitutes the unalterable soul of a people. Merely intellectual qualities are capable of being modified by environmental influence, such as education; qualities of character almost totally escape that influence. No matter what external changes a nation may undergo, the soul of the people, its "character," maintains an imperturbable and motionless stolidity. In France, for example, "whether the authority placed at the head of the State is called king, emperor, or president, etc., is of no importance; this authority, whatever it be, will perforce have the same ideal, and this ideal is the same expression of the sentiments of the soul of the race."—"Intransigents, Radicals, Monarchists, Socialists, in a word, all the champions of the most diverse doctrines, pursue an

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of Peoples*, p. 46. And yet he had just said (p. 43) that the disappearance of this intellectual *élite* would cause to disappear at the same time "all that constitutes the glory of a nation—the nation would become a body *without a soul*."



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absolutely identical end: the absorption of the individual by the State." And this is the "character," the "soul," that weaves the destiny of France. And also it is the gift of heredity; unchangeable, immovable, ineluctable. "Forms of thought, logic, and, above all, character, are created by heredity alone. Environment affects it little, or not at all."—"The influences of environment only become really effective when heredity has caused their action to be continued in the same direction through a long period." For all practical purposes the soul, the character, of the nation is unchangeable. And yet, notwithstanding this fatal unchangeability of the national character, M. Le Bon lives in a state of constant trepidation lest his "solidly constituted collective soul" is going to dissolve at the first touch of external pressure. "The dissociation of the national soul always marks the hour of its decadence. The intervention of foreign elements constitutes the surest means of this dissociation being compassed." Every day the Latin nations, particularly France, "are losing their initiative, their energy, their will, and their capacity to act"—in a word, their unchangeable soul is changing. Elsewhere M. Le Bon states that Socialism, by its conception of international solidarity, is introducing into national life those foreign elements which, by breaking up the solidly constituted collective soul, lead rapidly and inevitably to national decadence and disruption.<sup>1</sup> Where is now the unalterable national soul? Broken up under the influence of an environment which does not affect it, it can only be altered back again to its original unalterable condition by a further change of environment, the imposition, namely, of very severe universal military service and the perpetual menace of disastrous wars.

M. Le Bon's theory of the unalterable soul thus commits suicide at the first touch of reality. That he should adhere to it in the face of so much evidence accumulated

<sup>1</sup> "The presence, in the midst of a people, of foreigners even in small numbers, is sufficient to affect its soul; since it causes it to lose its capacity for defending the characteristics of its race, the monuments of its history, and the achievements of its ancestors."—*Psychology of Peoples*, p. 154. See also Book V. chap. i.

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by himself is an example of the effect of political prejudice in hampering a vigorous intellect and clouding a lucid style. He supplies abundance of excellent material out of which one could construct a theory of national character totally different from the view he has chosen to advocate, and free, at any rate, from its ludicrous self-contradictions. He states explicitly at the outset that he will only deal with the formation and mental constitution of the historic races, that is, of "the races artificially formed in historic times by the chances of conquest, immigration and political changes." Allowing for the evident misuse of the term "races" in this sentence, the context showing that he means, not races, but nations or peoples,<sup>1</sup> he correctly describes the main influences which have moulded the character and destiny of the various historic nations of modern times. Stating, accurately enough, that "there is scarcely a European people which is not formed of the débris of other peoples," he shows how modern nations have arisen through the fusion of communities previously separate and frequently hostile to each other, and expresses the view that in the Englishman we have the only European example of a homogeneous result of this fusion. Now it is manifest that there must be something wrong about the theory of the unalterable soul, if, as M. Le Bon says in various places, Briton, Saxon, and Norman have become fused into a highly homogeneous type. How could three unalterable souls maintain their separate unalterability by fusing into a fourth? And here is a significant passage in one who has denied the influence of environment in forming character: "To enable a nation to constitute itself and to endure, it is necessary that its formation should be slow, and the result of the gradual fusion of but slightly different races, interbreeding, living on the same soil, undergoing the action of the same environment, and having the same institutions and beliefs. After the lapse of several centuries these distinct races may come to form a highly homogeneous nation." How reasonable is this, compared with the Laputan generalities about "the

<sup>1</sup> "It is only among savages that it is possible to find peoples of absolute racial purity."—*Psychology of Peoples*, p. 16.

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unchangeable soul of the race weaving its own destiny"! Do not the "living on the same soil, undergoing the action of the same environment, and having the same institutions and beliefs," explain why in France "all the champions of the most diverse political doctrines pursue an absolutely identical end"? The "unalterable soul" theory will not explain that distressing unanimity, because, as M. Le Bon remarks, "if there does not yet exist an average type of the Frenchman, there at least exist average types of certain regions. Unfortunately these types are very distinct as regards their ideas and character," *i. e.* instead of France having one unalterable national soul she has several distinct souls located in different parts of the country, as in so many pineal glands, and these several souls are really only one soul, because they pursue the same end with the painful unanimity to which M. Le Bon refers.

We cannot refrain from one last quotation from M. Le Bon, because it disposes of his theory with a blow from which it cannot recover. "It thus happens that by means of heredity, education, surroundings, contagion and opinion, the men of each age and of each race possess a sum of average conceptions which render them singularly like one another, alike, indeed, to such a degree that, when the lapse of centuries allows us to consider them from their proper perspective, we recognize by their artistic, philosophical and literary productions the epoch at which they lived."—"It is precisely this network of common traditions, ideas, sentiments, beliefs and modes of thinking, that form the soul of a people." And as M. Le Bon elsewhere speaks of these common traditions, etc., as "that compact stock of hereditary commonplaces imposed upon us by education," it would appear that heredity, with this writer, is not necessarily heredity by blood but by tradition, and he thus himself clearly expresses the opinion that the character of a nation is entirely dependent upon environment and not upon an unalterable strain transmitted through the blood. Let us accept this conclusion with gratitude from M. Le Bon the historical critic, leaving the "unalterable soul" to be the plaything of M. Le Bon the political rhetorician.



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We have already mentioned that a variation of this theory is current in Germany, where, in some shape or another, it has been popular since Hegel taught the necessity of a unified German Empire based upon community of race and language. Although von Ihering, its most lucid and eloquent exponent, wrote before the recent great revival of anthropological and ethnological investigation, his work on the *Evolution of the Aryan* presents the case in a manner which needs no alteration from later advocates of the same theory. The strange thing about von Ihering is that, although he is a convinced believer in the theory of the unalterable soul transmissible by heredity, he devotes the earlier and greater part of his book to demonstrating, like any student of Buckle, that national character is the direct result of geographical and climatic conditions. His main thesis is that the various colonizing offshoots of the original "Aryan" stock, whose habitat he places, in harmony with a now heterodox theory, in Central Asia, were all marked when they left home by the same national, Aryan character, the product of the geographical and climatic situation of the original fatherland. The differences which were subsequently developed between the Celtic, Teutonic, Slavonic, Greek, Roman, Iranian and Hindu national characters, were entirely the work of the different physical environments in which these various peoples settled. "The soil is the nation"—that is the pregnant phrase in which von Ihering summarizes his conclusions. But as soon as his array of facts and his procession of arguments have convinced the reader that here is a writer who has found the truth, he perplexes and disturbs beyond expression by asserting that the first formation of national character under the influence of the environment is final, decisive and unchangeable, and is henceforward transmitted by racial heredity; a theory exemplified by his statement that the character of the Celts and the character of the Teutons, as described by Cæsar and Tacitus, are fundamentally the same as those of their respective descendants to-day. If this view be correct, we must believe that the Teutons, for example, when they "left Central Asia" with the fully

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formed national, Aryan character they had obtained under the geographical conditions prevailing there, had this fully formed national character profoundly modified by the new geographical conditions of their European habitat, and that at some time before the end of the first Christian century, when Tacitus wrote his account of Germany, they had acquired a new national character, which has since been transmitted unchanged from one generation to another. But if the character of the Germans was due to their geographical position, and if that character has remained fundamentally unaltered for at least 2000 years, to what cause are we to assign the failure of the soil to continue its developing influence? and at what point are we to fix the cessation of its power? "Soil," to von Ihering, is not the mere land, tilled, pastured, mined, or built over by the inhabitants, but the whole complex of its relationships with other lands whose geographical position brings them into connexion with it. Now it is notorious that ever since the days of Tacitus the inter-relationships of European communities in this respect have been constantly changing. Not to mention the extensive shiftings and interminglings of populations during the first millennium of our era, we have what is practically a complete change of geographical situation effected for all the nations of Europe by the discovery of the New World and the establishment of closer intercourse with the peoples of the Far East. At what particular moment in the history of a people does its geographical position cease to affect the character which it has produced? The foreign policy of the rulers of Britain has always been conditioned by her geographical position, and her geographical position has varied almost from day to day, according to the changing sentiments which actuate foreign nations in their relationships with her and which reciprocally actuate her in her relationships with foreign nations.<sup>1</sup> If, therefore, it is true that national

<sup>1</sup> "Not only will the Adriatic outlet enable Serbia to have freedom of export and import, it will give her new neighbours, since every maritime nation will then be Serbia's neighbour as much as Austria is to-day. This is especially true of England. This point of contact with England . . . will enable her to develop freely and liberally,

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character depends upon geographical situation, there can be no such thing as the final crystallization of national character, which must, on the contrary, be constantly undergoing modifications of a varying degree of extent and intensity.

The theory of the "unalterable soul" thus expounded by M. Le Bon, and in a modified form by von Ihering, may, perhaps, be thought to have been placed upon a securer basis by the efforts of some modern ethnologists to trace back the descent of the peoples of European nationalities, with the object of showing that, though all are descended from some very few, say three or four, primitive races, yet these primitive races had separate characteristics which have come down to their descendants, who have every cause to be proud or ashamed of their ancestry accordingly. The results of modern ethnological investigations are used by some able scientists of the present day to place the theory of racial character upon a simpler and apparently more reasonable basis than it had previously occupied. The most interesting and, for the layman, most useful book from this point of view is that of Canon Isaac Taylor on *The Origin of the Aryans*.<sup>1</sup> This writer, summarizing ethnological results as he reads them, says that all the present populations of Europe are descended from four races who occupied it in Neolithic times. These were: (1) the Scandinavians, a tall, long-headed, fair-haired, blue-eyed, white-skinned race; (2) the Iberians, a short, long-headed, dark-haired, dark-eyed, dark-skinned race; (3) the Celts, a tall, short-headed, red-haired, light-eyed, ruddy-skinned race; and (4) the Ligurians, a short, short-headed, black-haired, black-eyed, dark-skinned race. And here is an example of the conclusions reached in consequence of this classification: "The energy, the self-will, the fondness for adventure and the love of combat which have enabled the Teutonic peoples to extend their rule over the world, come from

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encouraged and stimulated by the freedom and justice of England."—Letter of M. Pashitch, Prime Minister of Serbia, in *The Times*, Nov. 25, 1915.

<sup>1</sup> *The Origin of the Aryans*, by Isaac Taylor, M.A., Litt.D., Hon. LL.D. (Walter Scott: The "Contemporary Science" Series).



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the dolichocephalic race; but the intellect and genius of Europe, the great writers, and more especially the men of science, belong rather to the brachycephalic race." Again, "the dolichocephalic Teutonic race is Protestant, the brachycephalic Celto-Slavic race is either Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox. In the first, individualism, wilfulness, self-reliance, independence, are strongly developed; the second is submissive to authority and conservative in instincts. Ulster, the most Teutonic province of Ireland, is also the most firmly Protestant."<sup>1</sup> It is surely a matter for the most serious consideration, which we may recommend to the notice of the unwearied author of the latest, and one hopes the last, work on the Baconian heresy, why our historians have unanimously failed to record the fact that the conversion of England to Protestantism was accompanied by a sudden change in the skulls of the population from short to long. If Protestantism means "long-headed" in the scientific and not the Stock Exchange sense, why did Luther, the great Protestant and rebel *par excellence*, belong, as Canon Taylor tells us he belonged, to the short-headed, submissive race? If the short-headed people are submissive to authority and conservative in instinct, why did that universal revolutionist, Goethe, belong, as Canon Taylor tells us, to the short-headed race? And how does it happen that Shakespeare (as Dr. Keith tells us) is "short-headed" while Burns is "long-headed"? Was Shakespeare, as an artist and a poet, submissive to authority and conservative in instinct? Was Burns no genius because he was not of the race to which the "intellect and genius of Europe" belong?<sup>2</sup> And these sweeping conclusions are all based upon the measurements, more or less exact, of a few skulls and other bones which have been preserved—more or less—beneath the soil for several thousands of years. Before the war turned our thoughts in other directions, the world was being disturbed by a veritable tornado of mutually destructive scientific dogmatism raging around the recently discovered Piltdown bones. This is what

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Taylor, pp. 246-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245. See next note for Dr. Keith.

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Canon Taylor calls the "New Science" of Craniology, which permits its French and German acolytes to arrive at "scientific" conclusions in harmony with their respective "patriotic" prejudices.<sup>1</sup> The present writer frankly and gladly admits that on this subject he is a disciple of M. Jean Finot, whose famous and fascinating book on *Race Prejudice* has, in his opinion, laid the ghost of racial pride beyond power of resuscitation.

"The European population presents a mixture of long-headed, short-headed, medium-headed peoples. All these types are dispersed throughout Europe in the same countries, the same districts, the same families. Kollmann tells us, with reason, that all the skulls of the inhabitants of Europe approximate so much to one another that one might speak of a European skull. If we say 'European' it is only a manner of speaking. It is the civilized skull with which we are concerned, which is distinct from the skull of non-civilized and primitive peoples living outside civilization, and deprived of that cerebral exercise which civilization imposes." And as with skulls so with complexions. Germany, the land of the fair-haired, fair-skinned people, the marks of the noble, ruling Aryan race, showed, among seven million school children, 31 per cent. of fair-haired, 14 per cent. of brown-haired, and 55 per cent. of mixed type. And as with skulls and complexions, so with blood. "The anthropologists have not succeeded in finding the essential variations in the composition of the blood between men of yellow, black and white colour. Even the external signs are misleading. Mr. Booker Washington dwells pleasantly on the embarrassments of railway

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Keith, in an article on the heads of Burns and Shakespeare (see the *British Medical Journal*, Feb. 28, 1914), though quite positive in his ascription of Shakespeare to the "short-heads" and Burns to the "long-heads," does not indulge in the usual dogmatism as regards the results of the ascription. "Is it possible," he asks, "that we may explain the extraordinary difference in the working of their brains by the diversity of their racial origin?" And this seems quite as far as any one is justified in going. We imagine that Dr. Keith, or any other anthropologist, would not have been in the least degree surprised if Shakespeare had been "long-headed" and Burns "short-headed," instead of the reverse, utterly impossible as it is to discover what qualities of mind are "long-headed" and what are "short-headed."

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guards in the United States when called upon to decide the important question, 'Is such a traveller a negro or is he not?'" The followers of Canon Taylor's "New Science" have as little basis for their enormous superstructure of hereditary racial superiorities and inferiorities as the devout Catholic who at Valencia venerates the molar tooth of a mammoth as a relic of St. Christopher.

We shall see in due course that in England, at any rate, there is no possibility of a legitimate racial pride, except, perhaps, in the number of different peoples from whom our blood is drawn. Finot has arrived at the same result in the case of all the historic European nations in general. About his own people he says, "France is the vastest and richest reservoir of ethnical elements, and cannot claim the dominant quality of the Celtic people or country. If it is absolutely necessary to attribute Celtic descent to any European people, that people must be, not the French, but the Germans, while the French are, on the other hand, more Teutonic in blood than the Germans."<sup>1</sup> And yet we attribute "Teutonic phlegm" and "Gallic vivacity" to the influence of race!

A less objectionable variation of the "geographical" theory of national character is that especially associated with the name of Ratzel, the author of a profound and fascinating *History of Mankind*, in which the relationships of the different human inhabitants of this globe are treated from the point of view of their geographical distribution.<sup>2</sup> Ratzel doubts—and one is happy to miss the dogmatic assertiveness of his compatriot, von Ihering—whether in physical or intellectual power, in virtue or capacity, we, the latest birth of time, are far ahead of our earliest generation of historically recorded ancestors, and he regards the main difference between us and them as lying in the fact that we have "laboured more, acquired more, lived more rapidly,

<sup>1</sup> *Race Prejudice*, by Jean Finot, translated by Florence Wade Evans (London: A. Constable & Co., 1906).

<sup>2</sup> *The History of Mankind*, by Professor Friedrich Ratzel, translated from the second German edition by A. J. Butler, M.A., with Introduction by E. B. Tylor, D.C.L., F.R.S. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1898).



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and, above all, have kept what we have acquired and known how to use it." Ratzel cites the Troglodytes of Herodotus (who dwelt near the Garamantes, "the inhabitants of the modern Fezzan"), identical with the Tebus of to-day, "who inhabit the natural caverns in their rocks," and "have lived for 2000 years in just the same way, having acquired nothing in addition to what they possessed then."<sup>1</sup> He argues that the differences of civilization which create the gap existing between two groups of human beings are quite independent of their mental *endowment*, being due, not to changes of intellectual or physical *capacity*, but to the mass of environmental accident, which is the true operative cause in determining the height of their respective degrees of civilization. This view regards the physical and intellectual *capacity* of a race as constituting an hereditary factor which remains constant from generation to generation, and does not perceptibly vary in different races. It argues that the difference of achievement between nation and nation is due to the difference in the circumstances upon which the constant factors have had to operate, not, however, because the environment has stamped itself upon the race in the production of fresh qualities, which have then been transmitted by heredity, but rather because the same essentially unchanging factors have had different circumstances to contend with, and have, therefore, exhibited themselves in a different way, have, in a word, produced differences of character. The natural *capacity*, intellectual, moral, physical, of any people is, therefore, represented by an unvarying *x*, which is the same for Teuton, Celt, Hindu, Mongolian, Negro, etc., the manifest differences of character which we now observe in these varying peoples being due to the differences of their environment, which have caused the unvarying *x* to enter into combination with a constantly varying *y*. So far as concerns the differences that arise from epoch to epoch in the history of

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus: Melp. 183—οἱ Γαράμαντες δὲ οὗτοι τοὺς τρωγλοδυτάς Αἰθίοπας θηρεύουσι τοῖσι τεθρίπποισι. Οἱ γὰρ τρωγλοδυταὶ Αἰθίοπες, πόδας τάχιστα ἀνθρώπων πάντων εἰσι τῶν ἡμεῖς περὶ λόγους ἀποφερομένους ἀκούομεν—γλῶσσαν δὲ οὐδεμίῃ ἄλλῃ παρομοίῃν νενομίκασι, ἀλλὰ τετρίγασι κατὰ περ αἱ νυκτερίδες. See Ratzel, pp. 4, 19.

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the same race, these also are due to differences of environment. The progress of civilization has brought it about that differences of circumstance are constantly arising for the vast majority of human races; few races being confronted with the same circumstances in two different generations, each generation having its own in addition to those that have been handed down to it by tradition. Constancy of the hereditary factor would, therefore, be quite consistent with a progressive change of national character. The hereditary mental, emotional and physical capacities enter into different relationships with the changing environment of each generation, and the result is a national character varying from stage to stage in the history of the race. Ratzel's strong perception of the identity of the hereditary endowment does not prevent him from seeing that the character of a people face to face with all the infinitely complicated influences of an elaborate civilization must necessarily be different from the character of a people retaining the primitive environment of their ancestors of 2000 years ago.

The theory of Ratzel is substantially that of Mr. Burt, to whose views reference has been already made; but the latter develops it so as to give the hereditary principle some participation in effecting the changes of character which are manifest in the same people, and which produce gaps between different peoples even of allied descent. Prof. Burt maintains that the "*contents* of the mind, its memories and its habits, its thoughts and its ideals are not inherited: they are without doubt acquired during the lifetime of the individual. But the *capacity* to acquire, and the *inclination towards* certain acquisitions, these may be present from the beginning."—"The intensity of mental inheritance appears closely to resemble that of physical inheritance, both in man and in other animals, and, so far as mental capacity rather than mental content is concerned, far to outweigh the intensity of environmental influences." This principle of Karl Pearson's is made the subject of some striking experiments recorded by Mr. Burt, and is then transferred from the sphere of the individual to that of the nation. "Never have forces acted upon

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the mind with such persistence and in such numbers as during the historic period; never have habits, memories and ideas been acquired and re-acquired upon so vast a scale. Yet there is a striking consensus of opinion to the effect that, in the main, the human race has, in its innate qualities, remained practically stationary. Civilization, therefore, has been an advance in mental content stored in the environment, and re-acquired with each succeeding generation, rather than an improvement in hereditary capacities, or an inheritance of the improvements acquired. All that is inherited is the original constitution common to the race and the congenital variations that from time to time spontaneously occur; the superiority of modern civilized man is due, not to hereditary powers and capacities, but to mental contents and achievements transmitted and accumulated, not by inheritance but by tradition."

This, of course, is in fundamental agreement with the position of Ratzel, corroborating the view that national character consists in the relationship into which the hereditary mental factor enters with the objective environment, or, to use Mr. Burt's own phrasing, into which the hereditary capacities enter with the mental content stored in the environment.

We must not, however, fail to note, as opening the door to wide exceptions to this general agreement, the additional hereditary factor introduced by the words just quoted, in which "the congenital variations that from time to time spontaneously occur" are mentioned as one of the causes of the superiority of modern civilized man, such spontaneously arising congenital variations being ascribed as the cause of the hereditary mental differences which are asserted by Mr. Burt as existing among the races of civilized Europe. These differences cannot, of course, be due to differences in the original hereditary capacity of the race, since Mr. Burt admits the equality of all the existing races of Europe, nay, of the world, in that respect; and it is clear, therefore, according to this view, that heredity operates, not only in the transmission of the original and constant factor, but in the transmission of new factors which have spontaneously arisen. These new factors are assigned



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to the operation of the principle of "organic natural selection, overlooked by the biologists, but simultaneously discovered by an English and an American psychologist."—"The principle of organic natural selection postulates the inheritance of only small variations, which occur in all directions, and are successively accumulated. If, therefore, in an intelligent animal, a particular congenital variation arises which is useful to the animal, it can be eked out by inheritance, by acquired habits, and by conscious guidance. It will in turn co-operate with intelligence, and the two together will save the animal's life where one alone will not. Thus sheltered, the variation arising congenitally in the sire will be protected and handed down to the next descendant, although the completed intelligent action will not. But sooner or later some other suitable adaptation will spontaneously arise among the congenital variations; the two will co-operate; be protected; and handed down; and, by the subsequent occurrence of the necessary spontaneous congenital variations, a completed mental quality will eventually arise"; and, therefore, "by the co-operation of mind natural selection can evolve the most complex properties of mind without these properties being inherited except when they are inborn." The position, therefore, is that heredity can, in this way, operate to "evolve the most complex properties of mind," and Mr. Burt makes it clear that the great differences now marking the characters of the various peoples of Europe may quite reasonably, in his opinion, be assigned to this cause, and not entirely to the differences in their respective environments.

Now this view is very plausible, and even a layman in biology can find it interesting. But in the practical result there seems little to differentiate it from that theory which Mr. Burt characterizes as a "flagrant assumption" of "the new school of anthropo-geography," the theory that, "after environment has operated upon a community through a number of generations in succession, the characters thus accumulatively re-impressed upon it must become for the time hereditary." "Heredity," says Mr. Burt, "remains indispensable to explain

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the differences in mental capacities. These differences are the more fundamental." It is difficult to reconcile this position with that previously assumed by Prof. Burt, that "in the main the human race has in its hereditary qualities remained practically stationary," and that "the superiority of modern civilized man is due, not to hereditary powers and capacities, but to mental contents and achievements transmitted and accumulated, not by inheritance, but by tradition." That position, we submit, is not controverted with any effect by the principle of "organic natural selection"—"overlooked by the biologists." That the biologists have overlooked it in their own particular sphere does not tell greatly in its favour, but the chief reason against it is that it introduces a subtle, complicated, and infinitely dilatory principle to explain differences sufficiently intelligible without it. How long does Mr. Burt think it would take to establish a family, a line of people, all marked by heredity with a completed quality acquired in this way? And how much longer would it take for one of the peoples of modern Europe to embody that quality in its national character? This, of course, they could only do by learning it from the originally endowed family, because it must be a feat beyond even the imagination of a psychologist to suppose a few million people all spontaneously generating at birth the same congenital variation. The only means by which a mental variation in an individual could affect the mental character of the community to which the individual belonged would be for it to attract the attention of the community to its usefulness or its beauty, and thus obtain for it a conspicuous place in the communal environment. That is the only way in which a genius like Shakespeare can affect the national character of his people.

There is thus a considerable body of support for the view that the present civilized nations of Europe were, at least as far back as their history goes, endowed with intellectual, moral and emotional capacities which were fundamentally the same as they possess to-day, and that the gaps which now separate them in many important aspects of civilization are due to the effect of

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separate environments upon their common capacities.<sup>1</sup> We shall examine in a subsequent chapter some of the conclusions resulting from the views of those who hold, in face of a good deal of unanswered evidence and argument, that national character is a question of racial descent alone. At present we confine our remarks to the suggestion that the question of heredity is one to which many confused and conflicting answers are being given, and that one thing alone is certain, that to explain differences of national character by differences of hereditary endowments is to introduce an explanation which leaves the matter more in need of solution than before. The gradual alteration of national character by transmitting to the blood of one generation the habits acquired by its predecessor cannot be maintained by any one who is not prepared to overthrow the theory of Weismann of the non-transference by heredity of acquired characteristics, or the results of Mendel's experiments proving that even the innate characteristics of parents of mixed blood do not necessarily or even commonly blend, but tend to reappear in their original purity.<sup>2</sup> Weismann, it is true, admits that the primary cause of variation is always the effect of external influences, and that all growth is connected with smaller or greater deviations from the inherited developmental tendency. But he maintains that where these deviations only affect the body which the germ-plasm has produced they give rise to temporary non-

<sup>1</sup> "There is no reason to suppose that the innate faculties of a modern European differ essentially, or that they differ very greatly, from those of the savages who roamed the woods in prehistoric days. There is clearly no reason to suppose that the brain of a modern English baby is intrinsically more developed than that of an ancient Athenian baby. Yet there is a vast difference in many ways between the morality of the adult Englishman and that of the Scandinavian pirate or the wielder of flint instruments."—*The Science of Ethics*, by Leslie Stephen (Smith, Elder & Co., 1882), p. 102. Cp. Frederick York Powell: "Our minds are of little better quality than our ancestors'; but we profit by the vast mass of accepted, tested, and recorded information which they had not."—*Elton's Life*, Vol. II. p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *The Germ Plasm: A Theory of Heredity*, by August Weismann, translated by Parker and Rönnefeldt (W. Scott, 1893). *Mendel's Principles of Heredity*, by W. Bateson, M.A., F.R.S., V.M.H. (Cambridge University Press, 1909).



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hereditary variations. It is only when they occur in the germ-plasm itself that they are transmitted to the next generation. The enormous length of time required for such variations to arise is inherent in Weismann's position, but also follows from the fact that there is no evidence that any race has developed any hereditary physical variation in the course of its recorded history. The evidence is all in the other direction. It seems reasonable, therefore, to recognize, with Ratzel, Weismann and Burt alike, that historical times, at any rate, have produced no alteration in the intellectual or moral character of a race as handed down by heredity. But that alterations of the most striking character have been effected is a truism. These changes are easily explicable upon the assumption that, while the national capacity or endowment has remained unchanged, the environment has been constantly modified, and the observed changes of character are due to the different results produced by the same mental factor acting upon different environments.

### CHAPTER III

The racial Fallacy as illustrated in Politicians and Historians of the present Day—Mr. Garvin and the "sea Sense" of the English—Mr. Lloyd George and "Differences of Blood" in Ireland—Sir Wm. Ridgeway and the "ancient warlike Instinct" of the Himalayan and Scottish Highlanders—Lord Acton and the "Levity" and "Inconstancy" of the French—Dr. Seton-Watson and Roumania as "racial Link with Italy and France"—"The Roumanian never dies"—Race Consciousness an artificially created Element in the Environment, often due to false Readings of History—The Absurdity and Impossibility of applying "Race" as a Test of Nationality, *e. g.* in Turkey, Macedonia, and the Balkan States generally.

THE scientific or philosophic guise of the lucubrations analysed in the last chapter does not conceal the contradictions and absurdities in which the devotee of the racial fetish is involved. His most solid convictions crumble at a touch; and to retain his belief in his shibboleth he has to shut his eyes to facts with the unquestioning fanaticism of a primitive idolater. It is, indeed, difficult to refrain from impatient words in face of those who hold the racial theory of nationality, because, since nationality is the most dominating practical issue of the present day, a false view of its origin and evolution is likely to be fraught with the most disastrous issues in the sphere of practical politics. It is this theory, for example, adopted by the German military and political leaders from writers like Chamberlain, which has proved itself so dangerous to the peace and happiness of humanity. Impatience, perhaps, is pardonable in one who raises his voice against so monstrous an aberration of intelligence, especially when he sees daily signs that the statesmen and writers of his own country are, through pure thoughtlessness, not entirely free from devotion to the worship of this fantastic and impossible fetish. It is more than two generations since John Stuart Mill expressed the opinion

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that "of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind, the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences." This assertion received the immediate and cordial assent of Buckle,<sup>1</sup> who was, however, perhaps inclined to attach too much importance to the operation of Climate, Food, and Soil in producing the admittedly "large and conspicuous differences" existing between nations. But the view of Mill and Buckle has not been generally accepted. Although there have been written in English some few important works exposing the utter fallaciousness of the "racial" basis of nationality: whilst no distinguished British author has dedicated himself to a vindication of the racial hypothesis: there has been no widespread recognition of any non-racial view of nationality; but, on the contrary, the opposing theory has permeated with its influence much of our literature and politics, and even when it is not expressly asserted it is tacitly admitted as the premiss of important conclusions; and that, too, although even a slight analysis often shows that the premiss and the conclusions carry with them their own refutation. It will be readily agreed by those who have any acquaintance with the subject that the following examples, chosen almost at random from recent contributions to social or political criticism, are typical of the opinions still generally held in Great Britain on this topic.

Mr. J. L. Garvin, for instance, whose brilliant weekly sermons in the *Observer* have, nevertheless, been, throughout the war, a perpetual inspiration to a sane and self-sacrificing patriotism, has furnished a few quaint specimens of the self-contradictions inherent in the racial hypothesis.<sup>2</sup> Here is a characteristic example. After an eloquent explanation of the naval greatness of the British "race" as being due to that "sea sense" which is the natural heritage of all Britons alike, he insists upon the necessity of placing a sailor at the head of the Admiralty because a sailor alone possesses that

<sup>1</sup> Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*, Vol. I. p. 31 (Frowde's "World's Classics").

<sup>2</sup> Reference unfortunately missing. Qy. *Observer* about March 1917?



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"sea sense" which has just been bestowed upon landmen and sailors alike. The refuting self-contradiction might have been spared had Mr. Garvin recalled what another great Imperialist had said about the origin of our maritime power. "It is not the blood of the Vikings," wrote Sir J. R. Seeley, "that makes us rulers of the sea, nor the industrial genius of the Anglo-Saxon that makes us great in manufactures and commerce, but a much more special circumstance, which did not arise till for many centuries we had been agricultural or pastoral, warlike and indifferent to the sea."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Prime Minister would not have asserted in the House of Commons that the quarrel between Ulster and Ireland was due to "difference of blood" had he remembered the known historical facts as to the great infusion of Norman and Saxon elements in the general population of Ireland, and the circumstance that even so long ago as the fourteenth century these English elements were "more Irish than the Irish themselves." But if journalists and politicians writing and speaking on the spur of the moment may be pardoned these lapses, what are we to say of such a laborious and erudite author as Sir Wm. Ridgeway, who, in a work so remote from our present political excitements as his *Early Age of Greece*, frequently shows himself as reposing implicit faith in the racial fantasy?<sup>2</sup> "It is," says he, "in the beautiful valleys of the Himalayas that are cradled the bold tribes who cause such constant trouble on our Indian frontier. An ancient law of their nature compels them to descend into the rich plains of Hindostan to make swordland of them, and to make serfs of the ryots."—"When the Highland clans could no longer with impunity harry the Lowlands of Scotland, they found an outlet for their ancient instinct in the newly-formed regiments of Highlanders, and so the tribesmen of the Himalayas are already finding an outlet for their warlike habits in the ranks of our Indian army." And, in like manner, we may presume, it is in obedience to an *ancient law of their nature*, and by way of an outlet for

<sup>1</sup> *The Expansion of England*, p. 87 (Macmillan, 1883).

<sup>2</sup> *The Early Age of Greece*, by William Ridgeway, M.A. In two vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1901), pp. 132-3.

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their *ancient warlike instinct*, that the Swiss mercenaries whose fighting propensities enliven the pages of Guicciardini are now the best waiters and hotel-managers in Europe! Even Lord Acton, who has no love for nationality, can admit the racial hypothesis for national character, if only with the petulant insincerity of a controversialist who will employ *any* argument to demolish an opponent. Attacking Buckle's view that "original distinctions of race are altogether hypothetical" as a "great absurdity," he quotes from Lasaulx the "judgments of the ancients upon the Gauls," their levity and inconstancy, their love of military glory and their desire for revolution, and, imputing these qualities to the French nation of the present day, he argues from this purely hypothetical identification of Gauls with Frenchmen that the qualities of the former have descended to the latter as a permanent heritage of blood and race.<sup>1</sup> He is entirely oblivious of the large Teutonic and other intermixtures combining in the modern French;<sup>2</sup> oblivious, too, of the fact that the French, like all progressive peoples, exhibit different characteristics at different stages of their evolution. This fact was patent to any student of French history even when Lord Acton was living; and he, unhappily, did not survive to see that dramatic refutation of his opinion which we have had the glory of witnessing in the Great War, when the very children and grandchildren of those who fought in 1870 have displayed national characteristics totally different from those exhibited in the earlier struggle against Germany. Where now is the "levity," the "inconstancy," of the Gaul?

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Essays and Studies* (Macmillan, 1907), p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> See Finot and other ethnologists generally. M. Bergeret is but resuming the latest ethnological researches when he says, "La Gaule, quand César y entra, était peuplée de Celtes, de Gaulois, d'Ibères, différents les uns des autres d'origine et de religion.—Dans ce mélange humain les invasions versèrent des Germains, des Romains, des Sarrasins."—Anatole France, *L'Anneau d'Améthyste*, p. 352 (Calmont-Lévy). "Language is independent of race. Else would France be a Latin nation, whereas it is Celtic, Iberian, and Teutonic."—*Folk-Memory: or the Continuity of British Archaeology*, by Walter Johnson, F.G.S. (Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 90.

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Another remarkable example of the way in which the incubus of the racial fallacy obsesses the imagination of intelligent men has been quite recently provided by Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson, and that, too, in a sphere of political activity where this particular kind of false opinion is like to have dangerous results in practice. His book on *Roumania and the Great War*<sup>1</sup> opens by quoting the popular Roumanian proverb "Romanul nu pere" ("The Roumanian never dies"), and continues with the assertion that "its truth has been established by the astonishing vitality displayed by the Roumanian race during sixteen centuries."—"She" (Roumania) "is the sentinel of Latin culture in the east of Europe, a racial link with Italy and France amid a world of alien peoples"; and he states quite categorically that "the modern Roumanians are the descendants of those Roman colonists whom Trajan planted for the defence of the Empire against the Northern Barbarians."—"Their Latin origin is obvious to any one who walks through the streets of Bukharest; still more to any one who visits the remoter villages of Transylvania and sees the pure Roman types among the peasantry."

It is, of course, quite in harmony with the poetical and imaginative associations of the racial hypothesis that the careless vaunt of a popular patriotism should be made the motto of an historical and political discussion; nor need one be much surprised if the discussion partakes of the character of the motto. That the sentences which we have quoted as Dr. Seton-Watson's expansion of the meaning of the catch-word are poetical and imaginative, might be supposed even from his own subsequent statement that "for a thousand years" after A.D. 270 "this whole tract of country has nothing which can be even remotely described as history. It can boast an almost unique record of anarchy and chaos, with practically no memorials of either literature, architecture, or art. The whole period is shrouded in impenetrable obscurity, and it is not till the thirteenth century that the veil is lifted. By that time we find the country racially what it is to-day—Roumanian."

<sup>1</sup> *Roumania and the Great War*, by R. W. Seton-Watson, D.Litt. (Constable & Co., Ltd., 1915).



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But surely that is not the point at issue: what the writer really concludes from his remarkable effort in the contemplation of impenetrable obscurity is, not that the present-day Roumanians are descended from the Roumanians of the thirteenth century, but that the Roumanians of the thirteenth century were the descendants of Trajan's colonists in the second century. That this is his actual view is shown by the theories he mentions to explain the racial continuity. "The one view is that the native population preserved its identity virtually unimpaired through a thousand years of invasion and disturbance; the other that the population was withdrawn to the south of the Danube, remained there for a thousand years, and only began to return in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries." From other writers it appears that the withdrawal was a withdrawal to the Carpathians on the one hand, and to the Balkans, Rhodope and Pindus on the other. "On these heights," says Mdle. Stratilesco, "did the Roumanian nation take a lasting shape; the mountains are the creators as well as the cradle of the Roumanian nation."<sup>1</sup> These theories, put forward by the rival political parties in Transylvania, the Magyars and the Roumanians, are suspect for that very reason. Mr. Samuelson, in his *Roumania: Past and Present*, states, with moderation unusual in this sphere, that "the bias exhibited by the different historians makes it impossible to arrive at any just conclusion on the subject."<sup>2</sup> The tales, moreover, of the various descents made from the Carpathians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries under Radu Negru, "the chief of the Daco-Roman colony of Fogaras," who became the first Voivode of the Roumanian province of Wallachia, and by Bogdan, or Dragosh, the ruler of "a colony of Daco-Roman descendants at Marmaros or Maramurish," who similarly became the first Voivode of the sister province of Moldavia, have all the fragile unsubstantiality of popular and patriotic legends, and cannot be made the

<sup>1</sup> *From Carpathian to Pindus: Pictures of Roumanian Country Life* by Tereza Stratilesco (T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), pp. 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> *Roumania: Past and Present*, by James Samuelson (Longmans, Green & Co., 1882).

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firm basis of historical conclusions. Dr. Seton-Watson himself accepts neither theory in full, while admitting their common tribute to the descent of Roumanians from Romans.

But a closer examination of the facts shows that neither form of the theory, nor both of them together, will support the conclusion imposed upon it. During Dr. Seton-Watson's thousand years of "impenetrable obscurity" successive invasions of Goths, Huns, Slavs, Avars, Lombards, Hungarians, and other peoples had turned the whole northern part of the Balkan Peninsula into a veritable *sentina gentium*. Frankly, it is an impossible supposition that, if the Daco-Romans had remained in the plains, they could have remained racially unaffected by these perpetual admixtures of foreign elements. If the "pure Roman strain" had survived this experience in Roumania, it had there accomplished a miracle which it had achieved in no other place in Europe or Asia or Africa. It is even doubtful whether a withdrawal to the mountains would have preserved the strain from all contamination. But that point it is not necessary to labour in face of the insistent question whether there was actually any "pure Roman strain" at the very beginning of Roumanian history. Does not all the available evidence point to the fact that Trajan's army consisted of legions drawn from every part of the Empire? That was the case with the Roman army of occupation in Britain, as shown by the list given of the Roman regiments stationed on the Saxon shore of Britain in the *Notitia Imperii*, put together about the end of the fourth century; and even a glance at Cæsar's *Commentaries* proves how common, and, indeed, how natural and inevitable, was the practice of using foreign auxiliaries in the Roman army. It is not without significance in this connexion that one of the Roman cohorts subsequently stationed in Britain was the *Prima Ælia Dacorum*, recruited, no doubt, from native Dacians who had submitted to Roman military discipline. Part of Trajan's army was probably drawn from Italy; but what share had the general population of Italy in the "pure Roman strain" either then or at any other time?

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Even if the Roman conquest of Dacia had been followed by a settlement restricted to the soldiers of the army of occupation, the colony would, so far as blood was concerned, have had a cosmopolitan rather than a Roman or even Italian character. But we have it on the respectable authority of Eutropius<sup>1</sup> that Trajan, after the conquest of Dacia, had transported thither an infinite host of people from the whole of the Roman world. Nor must we forget that in A.D. 270, as Eutropius also tells us, the Emperor Aurelian "withdrew the Romans from the cities and fields of Dacia and settled them in mid-Moesia," *i. e.* modern Serbia, leaving in Dacia, as Gibbon says, only "a considerable number of degenerate Romans who dreaded exile more than a Gothic master."<sup>2</sup> These considerations, without praying in aid the view of Carra, that Dacia was colonized by the "scum of the principal towns of Greece and the Roman Empire";<sup>3</sup> or Freeman's, that the Roumanians represent, "not specially Dacians or Roman colonists in Dacia, but the great Thracian race generally";<sup>4</sup> or Mr. Brailsford's, that "Trajan's colonies in the Danubian provinces, to which the Roumans of Roumania love to trace their origin, were drawn from every quarter of the Roman world—*save Italy*"<sup>5</sup>—these considerations are sufficient to suggest serious limitations to the modern Roumanian's pride in his pure Roman breed. And, further, what reason is there to suppose that the "Roman" settlers did not "mingle their blood" with that of the native Dacians, Getans, or Thracians, or whatever they might have been? Mdlle. Stratilesco, at any rate, says the Dacians and the colonists were "thoroughly mixed,"<sup>6</sup> thus forming a mingled strain, a "various colony," as Gibbon calls it, which, even in Roman times, blended with its bar-

<sup>1</sup> Book VIII. chap. vi. : "Trajanus, victa Dacia, *ex toto orbe Romano infinitas eo copias hominum* transtulerat, ad agros et urbes colendas."

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, Chap. XL.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Samuelson, *Roumania: Past and Present*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ottoman Power in Europe*, p. 31 (quoted by Marriott, *Eastern Question*, p. 44).

<sup>5</sup> *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, by H. N. Brailsford (Methuen & Co., 1906), p. 180.

<sup>6</sup> *From Carpathian to Pindus*.



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barian conquerors, the Goths, and "claimed the fancied honour of a Scandinavian origin,"<sup>1</sup> thus establishing the right of modern Roumania, if we may paraphrase Dr. Seton-Watson, to be "a sentinel of *Teutonic* culture in the east of Europe, a racial link with *Germany and Norway* amid a world of alien peoples." So little purity had the strain at its first appearance in Dacia, whatever changes it may or may not have undergone under the ethnographical inundations of two thousand years!

And then as to the "pure Roman types" among the peasantry; what, we may ask, is a "pure Roman type"? Is it the type of Julius, or Augustus, or Tiberius, or Livia, or Julia, or Agrippina, or of any of the Roman portrait busts in the famous gallery at the British Museum? The author runs the risk of provoking a shudder among the race-worshippers when he remarks that the chief thing which has struck him in looking at this great assembly of Roman figures is how particularly English they are in feature and expression. Give Julius a frock-coat and silk hat and he would be Lord Morley; Tiberius a wig and he would be Bolingbroke or Shaftesbury; Augustus a starched ruff and flowing robes and Lord Burleigh would leap to life; while Titus Flavius Vespasianus is clearly Lord Halsbury; and Caracalla's profile could not be distinguished from that of the Australian soldier who was looking at him when the writer paid a recent visit to this imperial company. Travellers, too, have noticed "unmistakably Roman countenances" in Serbia,<sup>2</sup> and a willing eye can see them in every part of the European world. But Serbians do not claim to be "a racial link with France" on that ground, or on the equally valid ground that they, too, were a Roman colony, actually giving hospitality to Aurelian's exiles from Dacia, or on the still more reasonable pretext that large bodies of Gauls settled in Moesia after the defeat of Brennus in 277 B.C.

Thus we see that so far from the "Roumanian race" never perishing it never really existed at all. But, as

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, Chap. XI.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. the Rev. W. Denton, who saw one in a cowherd, "inherited from his fathers, the old masters of the world" (*Servia and the Servians*. London: Bell & Daldy, 1862).

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a matter of cold historical fact, great crowds of Roumanians have, indeed, perished, if by perishing is meant the losing of their national identity in the national identity of another people. When, in the middle of the eleventh century, the Hungarians conquered the whole of the Carpathian plateau (Transylvania), the Roumanians, as part of the crumbling Bulgarian Empire, shared in the struggle against them, "and some of them were scattered as far as the mountains of Moravia, where a remnant of them is to be met with to-day, entirely Slavized" (Mdle. Stratilesco's word). At this time also, as Mdle. Stratilesco tells us, "many of the (Roumanian) nobility passed over to the conqueror, and so it came to pass that the Roumanian blood gave Hungary her greatest general, Joan Corvin de Huniade, and her greatest King, Mathias Corvin, son of the former.<sup>1</sup> Many of the Roumanian chiefs, in order to preserve their wealth and their privileges—or to obtain some more—passed over to the conqueror, accepted her language and religion, and were Magyarized." In Istria, too, "there is a still larger number of Roumanians settled down, especially on the eastern coast of the Peninsula, on the slopes of Monte Maggiore. These also have been Slavized" (again Mdle. Stratilesco's word). Even the few thousand left are "fatally marked for death under strong pressure of Slav influence." Mdle. Stratilesco also speaks of the "danger of Slavization" to which the Roumanians of the Bukovina were subjected by the powerful Slav element introduced thither from Galicia when, previous to 1849, it was in union with that province. And elsewhere the story of destruction is the same; but still Mdle. Stratilesco, with a pride perhaps pardonable in a patriotic Roumanian, if not in an English historian, indulges in the irrepressible vaunt of "Romanul nu pere."

And, indeed, if only the meaning of the phrase were turned from "blood" to "tradition," from "race" to "culture," its truth need not be rejected by reasonable people. Apart from the language, about which we shall have something to say shortly, there are indubitable

<sup>1</sup> We leave these famous names in the form which Mdle. Stratilesco gives them.

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indications in Roumanian social and religious and political life suggesting a continuous tradition from the days of the Roman colony. If the Roumanians of Transylvania and of Roumania proper, which admittedly share a common tradition and a common culture now some eight centuries old, could be shown to trace that common culture for a thousand years still earlier, their claims to national union would be strengthened, and they would have a more legitimate cause for national pride than all the fancied ties of common race. Even when a people merges its identity in another people its culture may continue, forming a nucleus around which may grow the traditions and cultures of many commingling peoples. And when in such a case the original language survives, the strangers who adopt it come within the influence of the institutions, customs, manners, etc., which necessarily form the subjects of language even in the absence of a written literature, and the original tradition is maintained, and even strengthened and enriched, by the traditional culture of the newcomers. Nothing, indeed, is more fallacious as a test of identity of race than identity of language. It might reasonably be argued that if purity of speech meant purity of race, a corrupted dialect was a sign of corrupt descent; and Æneas Sylvius (Pope Pius II., 1458) pointed out that in his day the Roumanians "speak the Roman language so mutilated that an Italian can hardly understand them." But that the Roumanian language has been the main instrument in continuing the tradition with which it was first associated will probably be agreed by all political parties alike; and the true line of connexion between the Roumanians of the present day and the Daco-Romans of the second century lies in continuity of language and the tradition it embodies and is associated with, and not in race. The power of tradition and environment in fostering nationality is implicitly and most forcibly admitted by the racial apologists of nationality, inasmuch as their efforts have been directed to strengthen race-consciousness, which, as we have already seen, is itself an influence of the environment. It is not race itself which is a factor in national development, but a sense of the unity of



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purpose springing from fancied unity of race; and, as a matter of fact, the national consciousness of Roumania was largely inspired and guided by the efforts of Roumanian exiles in Paris who, from 1848 onwards, taught to Roumanians the lesson of national freedom they had learned in Western Europe. Whether national unity is more likely to be fostered by false views of history, based upon the outworn creeds of race, or by a study of the development of that historical continuity actually existing through nearly 2000 years, is surely a matter which needs no argument to settle. National pride, at any rate, has a surer and more legitimate basis in continuity of tradition than in continuity of racial descent; and the claim of the Roumanian to be descended from the Roman would not be vitiated in the slightest degree were there not a single drop of Roman blood in either Wallachia or Moldavia. The golden thread of Latin culture, commingled and enfolded with strands from other looms, stretches to him in unbroken continuity from the time of Trajan and the Antonines, and the fact that for nearly 2000 years successive generations of men have laboured in the same task as that committed to him, the duty of handing down the tradition, improved if possible, but not debased, to his successors, is a nobler theme for patriotic pride than the purest descent with its ancestral bequest of unvarying racial characteristics.

"Bona nec sua quisque recuset:  
Nam genus et proavos et quae non fecimus ipsi  
Vix ea nostra voco."<sup>1</sup>

It is what the representatives of this Roman tradition have achieved from century to century that has brought under the Roumanian name the innumerable peoples who have felt the potent contact of its culture. The finer spirits among Roumanian patriots have themselves been exponents of this view. Speaking in the year 1858, Cogalniceanu, the Moldavian statesman, said, "We" (the Moldavians) "have the same origin as our brothers" (of Wallachia); "the same name and

<sup>1</sup> Ovid *Meta.* XIII. 139.

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language, the same faith and history, the same institutions, laws, and customs; we share the same hopes and fears; the same frontiers are placed under our care. In the past we have suffered the same griefs, and we now have to assure for ourselves the same future." This passage, quoted by Dr. Seton-Watson himself, gives a much sounder exposition of nationality than that which lays exclusive stress upon the fancied Roman descent of the modern Roumanian people.

These considerations will serve to show why the writer has thought it necessary to clear the ground of the racial fallacy before proceeding to suggest a more natural, moral and reasonable explanation of nationality and national character. The essence of the racial theory, especially as exhibited by writers of the school of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, is profoundly immoral, as well as unnatural and irrational. It asserts that, by virtue of belonging to a certain "race," every individual member of it possesses qualities which inevitably destine him to the realization of certain ends; in the case of the German the chief end being universal dominion, all other "races" being endowed with qualities which as inevitably destine them to submission and slavery to German ideals and German masters. This essentially foolish and immoral conception has been the root-cause of that diseased national egotism whose exhibition during the war has been at once the scorn and the horror of the civilized world; but even in the light of that exhibition the writer is glad that he has no word to add to the criticisms he applied to the theory before it had received so monstrous an apocalypse.

The view here advocated, therefore, is that "race" as a constituent element in nationality is a purely subjective emotion; a view already hinted at by Seeley when, in his analysis of nationality, he gave as one of its "uniting forces" "community of race, or, rather, *the belief in a community of race.*"<sup>1</sup> The effects of a belief are not dependent upon its validity; and no one can deny that this belief, like others equally false, has been productive, and is still productive to-day, of the most far-reaching results. It is quite easy to recognize that this

<sup>1</sup> *The Expansion of England*, p. 220 (1st edition).

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subjective belief may have an influence upon national action as great as that imputed to the direct operation of race as an hereditary force. But that it is not an hereditary force is proved by the fact that strangers admitted into the bosom of a community soon participate in all the emotions of patriotic interest felt by the native inhabitants. The foreign origin of the newcomers is often forgotten by their descendants, who become proud of their "racial descent" from a long-established native family; and that, too, before, upon any theory of racial heredity, a new strain of patriotism can have found its way into the blood of the immigrant line. The practical value of "race" is purely subjective: it is an emotion like that of the soldier who is proud of his regiment's history, not because he is descended from its earliest members, but because he feels that he belongs to *the same regiment* as they did; organic continuity of common interest is the basis of the life of a regiment as of all forms of social development. What soldier of the present day could believe that his military virtues had descended to him from the blood of the gaol-sweepings and social riff-raff who were enlisted in many of the great regiments of the early eighteenth century? "Community of race" obtains its force, not from any objective value as a scientific factor in national life, but from the fact that it is a belief imbibed from so many sentimental sources in history, literature and tradition. Race as an ideal conception has become part of the environing tradition which moulds national character. The belief in it as an objective influence transmitted in the blood is an interesting but perverted recognition of continuity of common interest as the effective force which produces nationality. The danger is that it should be perverted so far as to endeavour to force into common national organizations peoples claimed as belonging to the same race, but separated by different institutions, different laws and customs, different hopes and fears, different sympathies and different hates. There is hardly, for example, one of the numerous volumes dealing with the Balkan States or with Austria which does not contain dangerous examples of this fallacy. But as we have already noted the difficulty, nay, indeed, the impossible



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absurdity, involved in applying the racial solution to the question of Roumanian nationality, so the same difficulty, impossibility and absurdity haunt the racial fetish in all its manifestations in Balkan politics. In Turkey, as Mr. Brailsford points out, the supremacy of the ruling classes rests, not upon race, but on religion.<sup>1</sup> The conquering Osmanli Turks have few descendants among the dominant ranks, which are mostly composed of converted Slavs and Albanians. Mr. Brailsford tells of a young Turkish officer he met who was of Greek descent and yet politically "Turkish of the Turks," ineradicably stamped with the Turkish tradition of ascendancy. This instance recalls that of Ali Pacha, the famous governor of Jannina, who claimed descent from Pyrrhus of Epirus, and had his own private Homer to sing his deeds in modern Greek verse; and both he and his Homer were Albanians, although Turks and Moslems. No wonder that the fez, once the distinctive headgear of the Greek, is now the symbol of patriotic Turkish loyalty!

In Macedonia the instability of "race" is notorious, nationality, that is, "race," being the result of "propaganda" either educational or military. The innumerable Balkan invasions have not left Macedonia unvisited, and no one of the competing Balkan Powers who strive for ascendancy there has yet been able efficiently to impress its own "race" distinctions upon the Macedonians, although Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians and Roumanians have been more or less successful in that direction, according to the weight of their arm or the depth of their purse. In 1906 Roumania was spending 600,000 francs in propaganda of various descriptions, a financial method of imposing nationality which receives its appropriate comment in the remark of a French consul who declared that "with a million francs he would make all Macedonia French." "A hundred years ago," says Mr. Brailsford, "it would have been hard to find a Central Macedonian who could have answered with any intelligence the question whether he were Servian or Bulgarian by race."—"It is not uncommon to find fathers who are themselves officially 'Greeks' equally

<sup>1</sup> *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future.*

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proud of bringing into the world 'Greek,' 'Servian,' 'Bulgarian,' and 'Roumanian' children."—"Is your village Greek or Bulgarian?" "Well, it is Bulgarian now, but four years ago it was Greek." The Vlachs of Macedonia attract Roumanian attention on the ostensible ground that they share the Roman descent of their patrons; but, like the Roumanians themselves, they rapidly lose their national characteristics when they leave their native mountains and settle in the plains, being there easily merged in the peoples who surround them. Metzovo, the chief Vlach village, is more Greek than Vlach, owing to the generosity of one of its natives, George Averoff, whose birth was Vlach, whose name was Slav, and whose education was Greek.<sup>1</sup>

These examples, which could be multiplied *ad infinitum*, not only in Turkey and Macedonia, but in Serbia, Roumania, Bulgaria and Austria, sufficiently illustrate the folly of attempting to determine political divisions by means of racial distinctions, and it should be one of the aims of constructive international statesmanship, now that the war is over, to avoid the disasters to which a blind adherence to community of race, in preference to organic continuity of common interest, would inevitably lead.

<sup>1</sup> *The Nomads of the Balkans: An Account of Life and Customs among the Vlachs of Northern Pindus*, by A. J. B. Wace, M.A., and M. S. Thompson, M.A. (Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1914).

## CHAPTER IV

Race a metaphysical Conception, having no Foundation in practical Life—The Jews oft quoted as owing their mental Characteristics to Race—German Imperialists and the Jews: Houston Stewart Chamberlain—The so-called racial Qualities of the Jew due to Environment: the Assimilation of the Jews—Their successful Adoption of "foreign" Characteristics—The alien and oriental "English Gentleman"—The French Nationalists and the Jew—Maurice Barrès—The Jew as Patriot—Nationality, again, not founded on Race, but on Experience—To what Principle of Experience is Nationality to be assigned?

THE fact of the matter is that if we could treat Race from the abstract point of view, putting it into that metaphysical world of the schoolmen in which any old *a priori* notion is true if it is at once simple and self-consistent, nothing would be easier than to form a Theory of Race as satisfying to the intellect, and as irreconcilable with the real world, as any idealistic system of philosophy from Plato to Hegel, from Berkeley to Bergson. That is to say, it is quite easy to conceive of a number of distinct races, each physically and intellectually possessed of a different ensemble of powers, each generation handing down unaltered to its successors the sacred gift of racial solidarity and exclusiveness, and all the generations alike shunning blood mixture with the contemporaneous generations of any other race. The conception is quite easy, and one could as easily build up a whole complete universe out of the conception; a universe which would have its own laws and would be true to them; a simple, self-consistent universe, as simple and self-consistent as Plato's doctrine of Anamnesis and as remote from tangible or demonstrable fact. For such a conception could not be fitted in with the actual phenomena of race as we know them in the everyday world of experience. Everywhere we find an inextricable jumble of meeting and mingling elements from different racial sources; everywhere we find that "chaos of the Peoples"



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which one of the most convinced advocates of "Race" would have us believe was confined to the Mediterranean lands at the commencement of the Christian era.<sup>1</sup> Whenever the attempt is made to talk about the abstract "Race" as if it existed in the actual world, we are faced by contradictions and tripped up by absurdities which now, as in Plato's time, are the fate of the philosopher whose eyes are in the clouds what time his feet lead him into the pit. The conception of Race, as such, is utterly incapable of explaining human development; utterly incapable of explaining national character; utterly incapable of explaining any phenomenon of nationality. If, however, we substitute for this metaphysical abstraction—the product of a foolish and spurious patriotism "moving about in worlds not realized"—if we substitute for this the conception of that organic continuity of common interest which is based upon the recognition of hard historical data, we find ourselves at once in a position to explain with clearness much in the growth of nations which would otherwise be obscure or totally inexplicable.

Is there a single intellectual or moral quality which can be satisfactorily explained as the gift of a special race to its people? If so, why do not all the members of the race possess it equally? Why do some not possess it at all? Is there a single intellectual or moral quality specially marking a people which cannot be explained as the gift of environment to that people? If there is, why do representatives of different racial elements in the same people exhibit the same intellectual and moral qualities to such a degree that no one would suspect the existence of difference of race? Why do Jews exhibit those specially English qualities which make

<sup>1</sup> *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, von Houston Stewart Chamberlain, translated into English by John Lees, M.A., D.Lit. (Edin.), under the title of *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (London: John Lane, 1911), Vol. I. pp. 254 *sqq.* The severity of this criticism of Chamberlain—if severe it be—is not due to feeling excited by the war. It was wholly written before the war, and is based entirely on the study of his works. The writer, he must add, finds himself completely out of sympathy with that form of criticism which pleases popular prejudice by calling Chamberlain a "renegade" because he did not in war desert a country which he had adopted in peace.

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them British Prime Ministers and Lord Chief Justices? The case of the Jews is so often quoted as finally settling the question of Race in a sense against that advocated in these pages, that the author has no alternative but to deal with it from his point of view. And he is quite willing to stand or fall by it as an *experimentum crucis*.

But even if that were not so, the Jewish question, as a matter of practical politics, is so interwoven with the assumptions of the racial extremists, both in France and in Germany, not to speak of Russia and Austria, that it would be quite impossible for any student of modern nationality to pass it in silence. In Germany Herr Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and in France M. Maurice Barrès, have made themselves protagonists in great and widespread agitations against the Jew as a racial enemy of the civilizations of their countries. Herr Chamberlain, the apostle of Race in Germany, is of a distinguished English family by birth, but he has so identified himself with the habits, fashions and methods of his German environment as to be, in his own person, a most striking proof of the falsity of his own views. His monumental work on the *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, which has enjoyed enormous popularity in Germany, was translated into English early in the century, and Lord Redesdale wrote a eulogistic preface to the translation. The chief characteristic of Chamberlain's social politics is hatred of the Jew, whom he regards as the enemy *par excellence* of the German Race, in which, with that generous opulence of imagination which characterizes the world of Romance and Metaphysics alike, he includes the Celts and the Slavs. These belong to "one definite race of men, the Teutonic," for "under this designation I embrace the various portions of the one great North-European race, whether 'Teutonic' in the narrower Tacitean meaning, or Celts, or genuine Slavs."<sup>1</sup>—"Our civilization and culture, as in every previous and every contemporary case, are the work of a definite, individual racial type, a type possessing, like everything individual,

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, Intro., p. 67. The "genuine Slavs," it appears from Vol. II. p. 197, are those alone who are descended from the "ancient Teutons"!

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great gifts, but also insurmountable limitations."<sup>1</sup> With this "race" and this "race" alone is the salvation of the world; all the really "great" men who have done anything worth doing have belonged to it; even Jesus must, if possible, be proved an "Aryan," or, at any rate, a non-Jew.<sup>2</sup> It is quite easy to tell whether a person belongs to this race or not; quite easy for himself and quite easy for others. He has a subjective consciousness amounting to certitude: "The man who belongs to a distinct, pure race, never loses the sense of it": it is the "guardian angel of his lineage,"<sup>3</sup> and he possesses certain physical characteristics which are practically those of the Tacitean "Germans."—"Whoever does not possess these physical characteristics, no matter though he were born in the very heart of Germania, speaking a Germanic tongue from childhood, cannot be regarded as genuinely Germanic."<sup>4</sup> The physical signs of "race" are sometimes perceptible to small children—"Very small children, especially girls, frequently have quite a marked instinct for race. It frequently happens that children who have no conception of what 'Jew' means, or that there is any such thing in the world, begin to cry as soon as a genuine Jew or Jewess comes near them. The learned can frequently not tell a Jew from a non-Jew; the child that scarcely knows how to speak notices the difference. Is not" (the writer really must quote a few more lines of this delicious prattle) "is not that something? To me it seems worth as much as a whole anthropological congress, or at least a whole speech by Professor Kollmann. There is still something in the world besides compass and yard measure. Where the learned fails with his artificial constructions, one single unbiased glance can illumine the truth like a sunbeam."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, Intro., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211: "Whoever makes the assertion that Christ was a Jew is either ignorant or insincere." Cf. Vol. II. p. 57: "In spite of all assertions, it remains very doubtful whether Paul was a pure Jew by race."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 518-19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 537. Cf. p. 538: Questions of race are to be settled by "the eye of the breeder and the eye of the child." And yet this man talks about "the threadbare twaddle of ethical societies and such-like" (Vol. II. p. 135).



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We have quoted this passage in full because it is not only typical of the manner in which Chamberlain deals with his subject, but also because it expressly inculcates that manner as the right one to adopt towards his subject. The passage gives a capital illustration of that childishness which Chamberlain advocates as a means of truth more valuable than scientific methods. A book written in this style can have no positive value as a discussion of social phenomena, and, notwithstanding Lord Redesdale's extravagant panegyric of its author, we can have no hesitation in describing it as one of the most foolish books ever written. It is false in its theories; ludicrously inaccurate in its assertions; pompous and extravagant in its style; insolent to its critics and opponents.<sup>1</sup> It is so dominated by a spirit of stormy rhetoric that it contradicts itself with passion at every turn. It asserts as dogmas fancies of whose futility the author would have been aware even had he consulted his Jew-baiting baby. He frequently uses the terms "lie" and "liar" of others, while claiming that he is himself constitutionally incapable of lying.<sup>2</sup> He can never quote an opponent without covering him with abuse: his critics are "shallow, venal, ignorant babblers, slavish souls sprung from the chaos of peoples."<sup>3</sup> He is a twentieth-century exaggeration of the pompous and vapid bully who used to lord it in the *Quarterly* of the early nineteenth; he is a street-corner preacher now assuming the toga of Roman oratory, and now the robes of Christian ceremony; but he is a violent and vulgar charlatan all the time. We say, and say it deliberately, that he is the only author we have read to whose work Sidney Smith's phrase, "the crapulous eructations of a drunken cobbler," could appropriately be applied.

It is necessary to speak so of this book, because it

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare and Michael Angelo "do not know a word of Greek or Latin."—*Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, Intro., p. 68. This is just Chamberlain's style: no reticence, no qualification, no suggestion of uncertainty even in matters admittedly doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> See article by Lord Redesdale in *Edinburgh Review*, January 1914, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> *Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, p. 256. See also p. 542: "That is a lie," applied to Kollmann's claim that all European races are equally gifted for every task of culture.

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has obtained tremendous vogue in Germany, although here in England it seems to have attracted little attention, notwithstanding Lord Redesdale's eulogy, which he repeated in the *Edinburgh Review* for January 1914, although introducing a belated expression of regret at his master's hostility to the Jews. We have briefly summarized our view of it; we could expatiate at length with production of chapter and verse if necessary.

We have spoken of Chamberlain's self-contradictions. Here is an example. We mentioned just now his statement that no person could belong to his "German" race unless possessed of certain physical characteristics, "no matter though he were born in the very heart of Germania, speaking a Germanic tongue from childhood." Now Chamberlain takes up an admulatory pose before the "purity of the Jewish race," and exclaims with rapture: "Has not every genuine race its own glorious, incomparable physiognomy?"<sup>1</sup> Surely, then, the Jewish features will be the essential and indispensable qualifications of the Jew? Nothing of the kind. "One does not need to have the authentic Hittite nose to be a Jew: the term Jew rather denotes a special way of thinking and feeling. A man can very soon become a Jew without being an Israelite: often it needs only to have frequent intercourse with Jews, to read Jewish newspapers, to accustom himself to Jewish philosophy, literature, and art. On the other hand, it is senseless to call an Israelite a Jew, though his descent is beyond question, if he has succeeded in throwing off the fetters of Ezra and Nehemiah, and if the law of Moses has no place in his brain and contempt of others no place in his heart."—"With the Apostle Paul we must learn that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly." When Chamberlain speaks in this eminently reasonable manner he puts himself into harmony with greater men, and refutes his own fundamental position that race is fatal, final and ineluctable.<sup>2</sup> The importance of the contradiction

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 491-2. Cf. the well-known distinction in Heine—surely not unknown to Matthew Arnold: "'Juden' und 'Christen' sind für mich ganz sinnverwandte Worte im Gegensatz zu 'Hellenen,' mit

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far surpasses the importance of the writer who perpetrates it; he represents a type, the type which persecuted Dreyfus and Beiliss, and which arranges and executes the terrible pogrom.

Now according to Chamberlain the Jew represents certain qualities which are destructive of the qualities which he assigns to the world-saving "German" race. "If the Jewish influence were to gain the upper hand in Europe in the intellectual and cultural sphere, we should have one more example of negative, destructive power."<sup>1</sup> These qualities the Jew possesses in virtue of his race, "his definite, individual racial type." Herr Chamberlain is very rude to Réville because he has said that the question whether Christ was of Aryan descent is idle, and that a man belongs to the nation in whose midst he has grown up. "This," says Chamberlain, "this is what people call 'science' in the year of grace 1896. To think that, at the close of the nineteenth century, a professor could still be ignorant that the form of the head and the structure of the brain exercise quite decisive influence upon the form and structure of the thoughts, so that the influence of the surroundings, however great it may be estimated to be, is yet, by this initial fact of the physical tendencies, confined to definite capacities and possibilities, in other words, has definite paths marked out for it to follow."<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere he pushes this view of the all-importance of "race" to its logical conclusion, and, as will be seen, lands himself in the usual absurdity which greets us whenever plausible generalizations on "race" are brought to the test of actual fact.<sup>3</sup> Speaking of Jacob

welchem Namen ich ebenfalls kein bestimmtes Volk, sondern eine sowohl angeborene als angebildete Geistesrichtung und Anschauungsweise bezeichne, etc."—Heine: *Ueber Ludwig Börne*, Book I.

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, p. 492.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210: "O, Middle Ages!" exclaims Chamberlain, "when will your night leave us?"

<sup>3</sup> Here is a charming example. He says (*Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, p. 148) that the Teutons have an "original incapacity to judge acutely in questions of law," and furnishes a "conclusive proof" of the truth of the statement by quoting the fact that Otto the Great "could not decide, otherwise than by a duel, the fundamental question whether descendants should inherit or not." And yet Tacitus, eight



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Grimm's assertion that "Germanic strength decided the victory of Christianity," Chamberlain says, "It is a question, as it were, of brain convolutions: whatever is put in must bend and yield according to their shapes.—How infinitely important, for example, is the old Germanic belief in a 'universal, unchangeable, predestined and predestining fate'! Even in this one 'brain convolution,' which is common to all Indo-Europeans, lies—perhaps along with much superstition—the guarantee of a rich intellectual development in entirely different directions and upon clearly defined paths.—Just as a boat entrusted to the apparently uniform element of the ocean will be driven very different ways, according as the one current or the other seizes it, so the same ideas in different heads travel in widely different ways, and reach regions that have very little in common."<sup>1</sup> A more ridiculously inapplicable simile it would be impossible to conceive; but, disregarding that, what are we to think of the identity of that "brain convolution, common to the whole Indo-European race," which, as Chamberlain says, gives you a "religion of grace" or an "inductive science," a Spurgéon on the one hand or a Spencer on the other. To put it at the lowest, it would be quite as reasonable to assume two separate brain convolutions for these two separate results as it is to assume one. There does not seem anything particularly compelling, anything directly or inevitably fatal, in a tendency which lands its victims either in evangelical religion or in an atheistic naturalism according to circumstances. And what about the brain convolution of those who are neither agnostics nor evangelicals? And what of those who are both? And what, further, about the evangelicals and the agnostics who do not belong to the "race" of

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hundred years before Otto, says about the Germani: "Wills are unknown. *The Law of Succession is to children*" (*Germania*, Sect. xx). At what point between A.D. 100 and A.D. 950 did the Germans acquire "their original incapacity" to decide this point? "One might well," says Chamberlain, "relegate German law as an ideal to the future, but to seek it in the past is hypocritical twaddle."—True, indeed, if it be sought in this way.

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Nineteenth Century*, Vol. II. p. 109.

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Spencer or Spurgeon? Do they possess the same brain convolution? If not, why not? And if so, what is the value of race in differentiating the beliefs and attainments of mankind?

But foolish and inconsistent as these views of Chamberlain are, they are still held by a number of people, who always quote the Jews as an example of a pure race, whose qualities, physical and intellectual and moral, are theirs by racial descent, and whose possession of them differentiates them from the Europeans among whom they live, differentiates them to the extent of giving handles for persecution and massacres. As no case proves more clearly than that of the Jews the objective nullity of "race" as a factor in social development, it is important to examine it because of its political importance as well as for the general desirability of holding reasonable views upon it.

Although it is not necessary from our point of view to consider the question whether the Jews constitute a "pure" race: although a pure race is a metaphysical abstraction; it is interesting to note that, when we investigate the historical origins of the Jews, we find that complexity and plurality which we find in every other historical record of the first beginnings of a people. Ethnologists and anthropologists tell us that the Jews belong to the white race, but to the dark-complexioned division of that race: they are Melanochroic whites. These Melanochroic whites are subdivided into three groups: (1) the peoples of North Africa and Arabia, represented by the Arabian Bedouins, but including the Syrians and Babylonians; (2) the non-Arabian peoples of Western and Southern Asia, represented by the Armenians and Persians, and (3) the South-Europeans, represented by the Greeks. We are further informed by the authors of these classifications that the Jews are, originally, a cross between the first and the second of these three groups, or, more concisely speaking, between the Bedouins and the Hittites. The Bedouins belong to the so-called Semite group, and so far as culture and speech were concerned the Jews derived from them, but so far as descent is concerned the Jews have a closer relationship with the people of

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the second group, the inhabitants of Asia Minor and Persia, whom they resemble in their physical lineaments; especially the Armenians, whom the most experienced anthropologists cannot distinguish from Jews.<sup>1</sup> It may be admitted that during historical times until quite recently the Jews have been subjected to such social conditions of restriction and seclusion that they have admitted foreign admixture to their blood in a lesser degree than most peoples. But even if they had accomplished the physical, moral and political impossibility of a "pure" race, one would be entitled to ask what is its practical value when the so-called racial characteristics of the Jews are no more *their* characteristics than they are the characteristics of a dozen other peoples. If a Jew exhibits those qualities which fit him to be Lord Chief Justice of England, a position normally occupied by Englishmen fitted by the possession of similar qualities for the same post, if a Jew and an Englishman possess the same qualities although belonging to different races, what is the value of race in the struggle and turmoil of practical life? Besides, if the Jew possessed those qualities as an inevitable endowment of his race, if they were the necessary consequence of a particular convolution of his brain, should we not find every member of the race endowed with the same characteristics?

Perhaps at this point a critic not disinclined to admit the general truth of such considerations might object that "the Jews have, on the whole, clear physical characteristics by which the great majority can be recognized," and that "this is a remarkable fact which it is no good to deny or argue away."<sup>2</sup> But before we are impressed by this argument, let us reflect whither it would lead us in face of the fact that anthropologists cannot discriminate the physical characteristics of the Jew from those

<sup>1</sup> *Die Juden der Gegenwart: Eine Sozialwissenschaftliche Studie*, von Dr. Arthur Ruppin (Jüdischer Verlag, Köln und Leipzig). "Der erfahrenste Anthropologe würde sich vergeblich bemühen, aus einer Schar von Juden und Armenier die einen oder anderen herauszufinden." —Ruppin, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> This, of course, is an actual objection, having been advanced by a distinguished critic who honoured the author by reading the work in manuscript (Sir Stanley Leathes, K.C.B., M.A.).



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of the Armenian. Do the Jew and the Armenian possess the same "racial character"? Will Mr. Zangwill and his Zionists admit a contingent from Erzerum to join their ranks

"As they march, God's band,  
South, East, and on to the Pleasant Land"?

And what about the minority who, *ex hypothesi*, cannot be recognized as Jews by their physical characteristics? These are still Jews, although physically unrecognizable; and, therefore, possessed of certain well-defined moral or other characteristics which stamp them as Jews. But in this case what has become of the un-failing *liaison* between physical traits and moral character? The Jews of Roumania, we are told by Mdle. Stratilesco, "are quite a different type from the English Jew: always fair—with few exceptions—with red, thinly curled hair, conspicuously freckled face."<sup>1</sup> And yet, we presume, the Roumanian Jew is still a Jew, showing the unalterable moral type of his race, although the physical traits upon which it is supposed to depend are variable with his environment. Given, however, the general physical resemblance of the Jews in characteristics more lasting than the complexion, the colour of the hair, or the liability to freckles, experience shows that this resemblance has no constant relation to moral or intellectual character; and that, of two men with the same hooked nose and the same full lips, one may be as cunning as a diplomatist, the other as guileless as Parson Adams; one a generous and cultured English gentleman, the other a cheating huckster at his booth in the Rue Egnatia.

It is, of course, common knowledge that attempts are made to assign a general character to all Jews as such: the quality of commercial smartness and financial skill. But the slightest observation makes us aware that many indubitable Jews are as deficient in financial acuteness as the simplest shepherd of the dales or ploughman of the wolds.<sup>2</sup> There cannot, therefore, be

<sup>1</sup> *From Carpathian to Pindus*, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> The writer has met such Jews. So evidently has Mr. Zangwill, with his wider experience; and has given an instance in Moses Ansell (*Children of the Ghetto*, 1901).

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in the blood or brain of the Jews any special financial strain; if there were, it would show itself in all those who share the blood or brain. It would be difficult to conceive an environment which would not evoke a function of this kind if heredity gave it special prominence in the organism. That the most favourable environment does not always evoke it is a reasonable ground for believing that it has no special prominence in the organism. But if it is not possible to assume any hereditary endowment to explain the financial genius of the Jews neither is it necessary to do so. That the Jews as a whole have a long record of financial achievements it would be impossible to deny. But these achievements argue nothing more than the possession of the common natural aptitudes of humanity, incited, fostered and cultivated under the impulsion of a highly favourable environment.<sup>1</sup>

In Palestine the Jew was, for the most part, a farmer. It was only during the Babylonian exile that he turned his attention to commerce, a change of environment which naturally led to a change of habit. And it is the ultimate hope of the Zionist Movement—in which many Jews see the only means of saving their race from gradual disappearance by assimilation with the peoples among whom they live—that the Jews, with all their financial ability, will not have forgotten how to farm the lands which once were theirs, as they farm in America to-day.

So far as concerns the effect of their European environment upon the Jews, every child knows that during the Middle Ages the Jews were practically excluded from all occupations except trade and commerce. It requires

<sup>1</sup> "Die jüdische Rasse ist — nach einer Seite ihrer Veranlagung gleichsam die Inkarnation kapitalistisch-kaufmännischen Geistes."—W. Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, Bd. II. S. 349. Leipzig, 1902. Quoted by Ruppin, p. 47. Ruppin's note on this proves that the mercantile superiority of the Jews is only relative to the Continental peoples of Europe among whom they live. They have no superiority as compared with the Hindoos, Greeks, Armenians and Chinese. In the East the proverb says that in trade an Armenian is worth three Greeks and a Greek is worth three Jews. Ruppin suggests that the reason of this high commercial development is due to the antiquity of their civilization and the consequent length of their experience in getting a living.

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only a small advance in knowledge to be aware that the awakening of the commercial spirit in Christian Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the establishment of the great Trade Guilds, from which Jews were excluded, very soon effected a considerable change in the financial occupations of the Jews.<sup>1</sup> From merchants they became pedlars, pawnbrokers, hucksters and small money-lenders, and for nearly five hundred years remained such. But a further change of environment effected a further change of career. The eighteenth century saw the rise and rapid development of the great industrial age which still shapes all our lives. The development of industrialism has meant the re-ascent of the Jew to a pinnacle of wealth and influence undreamed of by even Solomon in all his glory. The Jew was a money-lender on a small scale for five hundred years; he now becomes a money-lender on a large scale; his wealth becomes "productive"; he can capitalize magnificent concerns; and out of the enormous profits rapidly and securely accruing he has no difficulty in getting his money repaid with opulence of interest. The association of Jew and Christian in capitalistic and industrial life soon breaks down the barriers of centuries of hate and contempt, and the political and social emancipation of the Jews in the countries of Western Europe is eventually effected, opening up to the Jews every career they choose to enter, giving these countries, not only great capitalists and financiers, but Jewish Prime Ministers, Jewish Judges, Jewish Postmaster-Generals, as well as artists, musicians, and men of letters.<sup>2</sup> What, again may we ask, is the specific meaning of his "race"

<sup>1</sup> These statements as to the generally financial character of Jewish occupations do not cover the whole ground; but their qualification does not help those who would contend that the Jews are financiers by race. "In mediæval society Jewish doctors kept alight the faint flicker of science in spite of the cold blasts of dogma. Jewish translators interpreted the ancient Classics to the barbarian world, and were the accepted teachers alike of Christian and Moslem philosophers.—They were great chart-makers too. Of poets and poetesses of fine inspiration there was never any lack."—Fredk. York Powell (see next note).

<sup>2</sup> "The French Revolution scotched the power of the persecutor and gave once more an open career to men like Marx, Lassalle, Darmesteter, Reinach, Disraeli, Gambetta."—Fredk. York Powell, Vol. II. p. 143 of his *Life and Letters*, by Oliver Elton (Clarendon Press, 1906).



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to an Englishman, when this oriental people, alien as possible to his own, comes into his environment and exhibits just those very qualities which he himself has exhibited and exhibits? The Jew was a farmer when he was in a farmer's environment; a pawnbroker when his political surroundings compelled him; a merchant prince when opportunity arose. There is now no career to which he cannot aspire; none for which he is not fitted. Noble poetry, lofty morality, supreme religious inspiration he had compassed when he wrote or thought in Hebrew or Aramaic; when he mastered the languages of Europe he shamed the pedantic subtleties of the Talmud by Philo's generous philosophy and Spinoza's profound meditations. We read with some incredulity accounts of how Catholic Spain allowed "secret" Jews to become Bishops and Archbishops,<sup>1</sup> but to-day a Jewish Lord Chief Justice decides between quarrelling Christian sects, and performs the functions of an Ecclesiastical Commissioner with general acquiescence and consent.

There is thus nothing in the history or the characteristics of the Jews which justifies the view that the latter are not the product of the former, or the view that history and characteristics alike are the necessary results of a peculiar cerebral convulsion. On the contrary, it is abundantly manifest, almost more so than in the case of any other people, that the environment of the Jews, when it has been constant from generation to generation—as, for example, during their centuries of imprisonment in the ghetto—has produced a constant character, and when the environment has varied, as it has from generation to generation during the last century and a half in Western Europe, the variations of the environment have been followed by variations of character which have small suggestion of the ghetto or the pawnshop.

Why is the Jew of Russia or Galicia to-day at the level of culture and character common to all European Jews in the fourteenth century? And why have the academically-educated Jews of Germany and England

<sup>1</sup> See David Mocatta, *The Jews in Spain and Portugal*, quoted by H. S. Chamberlain, Vol. I. p. 341.

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less in common with the Jew of Galicia and Russia than they have with non-Jewish Germans or Englishmen? To answer that question is to recognize that the character of a people depends upon its environment, and that with proper adjustments of education and tradition you can turn an oriental Jew into an occidental Englishman or *plus quam* occidental American. This view will be more fully illustrated in the following chapters, in which it is suggested that the handing down of a common tradition explains the similarities of character between the people of Tacitus and the people of *Beowulf*, and that the modifications and additions operating upon this tradition owing to successive changes of environment account for the dissimilarities of character between a people in one century and its representatives several centuries later. In the case of the West European Jews these changes of environment have been extremely great during the last century and a half, and the character of the Jews has, in West European countries, undergone correspondingly emphatic variations. But we need not be surprised if a Jew who has become in every respect a cultured English gentleman exhibits a casuistical subtlety in philosophy and religion, or a supreme skill in financial combinations, which do not characterize the ordinary Englishman any more than they characterize every Jew. Where they do exist, they are, no doubt, to some extent the result of the old tradition of Talmud training and financial alertness and experience handed down from the fathers of one generation to the childhood of the next. Dr. Ruppin seems to think that the sophistical subtlety and the financial skill are both alike due to the Talmud training, and, indeed, both qualities require a continual mental alertness and ever-active "smartness" for their perfection. The premium put upon superior knowledge of the Talmud by the East European Jews throughout the whole of the Middle Ages furnishes a very clear illustration of the way in which a characteristic can be fostered and perfected in a community. The well-to-do Jew with a marriageable daughter used to seek, not for a rich, but for a learned son-in-law, *i. e.*, as Dr. Ruppin says, for one deeply versed in the Talmud, and for the

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advantages of such a union he was prepared for material sacrifices in the way of financial assistance to the young couple.<sup>1</sup> Why postulate a special racial endowment of subtlety and smartness when the environment was so ready to create and to endow it? Why seek for a "learned" son-in-law if all members of the "race" possessed, *ipso facto*, the special qualities which "learning" gave? In so far as a tradition is permanent from generation to generation, so are the characteristics fostered by that tradition permanent from generation to generation. In so far as a tradition changes by addition, subtraction or modification, to that extent the characters nourished by the tradition are increased, diminished or modified, and according to the tradition prevalent in a particular generation will be the character of the people in that particular generation.

It is this consideration which proves the folly of the argument advanced by M. Maurice Barrès and the French Nationalists against the patriotism of Jews by adducing the case of Mr. Oswald John Simon, who had written to *The Times* to the effect that, in the event of his entering upon a parliamentary career, he wished to make it clear that in a supposed conflict between his duty as a Jew and his duty as an Englishman he would have to decide in favour of the former; because, said he, "I am what my ancestors were for thousands of years, rather than what they have been since the time of Oliver Cromwell."<sup>2</sup> We laugh to-day in England at the notion of a Jew placing his duty as a Jew before his duty as an Englishman, even in the unlikely event of the collision arising; but it is just as well to see that we are justified in laughing and that the argument is vicious and untenable. It would not be vicious and untenable if the views of Maurice Barrès, or Houston Chamberlain, or Gustave Le Bon, as to the fatality of race were true views. But when we accept a view which asserts that the Jew in England before Cromwell was surrounded by a crowd like that which at once bait Shylock and batten on him in the *Merchant of Venice*,

<sup>1</sup> Ruppin, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme*, par Maurice Barrès, de l'Académie Française (Paris: Librairie Félix Juven).



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and that his character necessarily responded to his surroundings; which recognizes that the life of the Jew in England since Cromwell's time has gradually grown richer in all the elements that make life worth living, until now the highest rewards that English society has to offer to its favourite children are offered to him, and that this successive amelioration of environment has necessarily brought with it an amelioration of character; we find it utterly impossible to conceive that a Jew of to-day could revert to the pre-Cromwellian conditions unless he deliberately chose to do so from a mistaken sense of duty or other conscious impulsion. Of course, if in Mr. Simon's family the pre-Cromwellian tradition of hatred and contempt had been maintained miraculously unchanged under three centuries of changing national environment, that would be another matter; but things being as they are, a Jew of to-day in the hypothetical case of Mr. Oswald Simon would choose in accordance with the learning and education of his own generation, and the learning and education of a Jew in England to-day are in essence the learning and education of an Englishman.<sup>1</sup>

So far as the Jews of Great Britain are concerned, the war has settled this question finally; their patriotism as Englishmen is beyond suspicion.<sup>2</sup> But England is not the only home of Jews, nor is it the only field of their patriotic exertions. In Poland, a regiment of Jewish volunteers fought under Kosciusko's banners, led by the Jewish Colonel Berko, who fell fighting against the Austrians in 1809; and to-day the orthodox

<sup>1</sup> "Mais il y a incompatibilité entre les Français et les juifs. L'antagonisme est irréductible. C'est une affaire de race."—"Je crois au contraire," dit M. Bergeret, "que les juifs sont extraordinairement assimilables et l'espèce d'hommes la plus plastique et malléable qui soit au monde."—Ce n'est pas la race qui fait la patrie. Rappelez-vous la belle parole de Renan; je voudrais pouvoir la citer exactement: 'Ce qui fait que des hommes forment un peuple, c'est le souvenir des grandes choses qu'ils ont faites ensemble et la volonté d'en accomplir des nouvelles.'"—Anatole France, *L'Anneau d'Améthyste* (Paris: Calmont-Lévy), pp. 351-3.

<sup>2</sup> At the very beginning of the war, when our army organization was still on a voluntary basis, it was remarked by a recruiting officer in the East End of London that "the little Jew boys have done very well."

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Jews are as patriotic as their Christian fellow-countrymen in their desire for a "great and strong Poland, whose territories shall sweep to the sea."<sup>1</sup> In Russia "the Jews have at all times furnished a goodly contingent to the revolutionary movement, and many of them have belied their traditional reputation of timidity and cowardice by taking part in very dangerous Terrorist enterprises, in some cases ending their careers on the scaffold." In 1897 they created a Social Democratic organization of their own, commonly known as the Bund, which joined, in 1898, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party.<sup>2</sup> Such facts as these demonstrate quite clearly the adaptability of the Jews to their immediate national environment in spite of their "fixed physical characteristics," and the futility of basing any social conclusion on the existence of such characteristics is illustrated by the apprehensions entertained in many quarters at the so-called "cosmopolitan" leanings of Jewish finance, which, if they prove anything at all relevant to the issue, prove that the Jew, with his national character finally and fatally fixed, does not possess any national character at all.

The process of assimilation which has transformed the Ghetto Jew into a modern English or German or Italian gentleman is a triumph of environment, and it is impossible, in our opinion, for anybody to read a clear and impartial account of this process (such as that given by Dr. Ruppin<sup>3</sup>) without being convinced that, for all practical purposes of social, political, economical, literary, scientific and artistic life, environment in the case of the Jews is everything and race nothing. Dr. Ruppin over and over again traces the steps by which, within a decade, or at most a generation, the orthodox Jew of Russia or Galicia becomes an American citizen of the most acceptable type. "The Jew who to-day emigrates to the United States as a strongly orthodox Jew, speaking Yiddish only, we find ten years later,

<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Perlmutter's speech in the Polish Diet on February 24, 1919, as reported by the *Daily News* correspondent at Warsaw in the *Daily News* of February 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Russia*, by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace. (See next chapter.)

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Ruppin, pp. 1-208.

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when he has escaped from the East End, already tolerant, speaking broken English, and attending a somewhat modernized religious service. At the expiration of twenty years he has actually joined Reformed Judaism, which holds the Sabbath on Sunday, speaks English for preference, and lets his children enjoy a modern American education. With his children, or at furthest his grandchildren, the feeling of Jewish communion is as good as vanished, and any breath of wind is sufficient to bring them to Christianity."<sup>1</sup> With these views Mr. Israel Zangwill is in entire harmony, as is proved by his play of the *Melting Pot*, and by innumerable passages in his fascinating English novels of Jewish life. One cannot imagine in such circumstances any conflict arising between a Judaic and an American sense of duty in the same individual citizen.

Although criminal statistics prove that the Jews are more given to intellectual crimes than to physical crimes, and some people imagine that the tendency to this sort of crime is racial, there can be no doubt that the general character of Jewish avocations conditions the general character of the crimes they commit; a statement which is proved by the fact that in Amsterdam, where the occupation is physical, the prevailing character of the Jewish criminal statistics is physical too. Dr. Ruppin himself evidently believes that the Jews possess specific racial qualities differentiating them from other people, but he is greatly alarmed at the rapid absorption of the Jews by other nationalities. If, however, the Jew kept his distinct racial qualities, he would not be assimilated; and if he could keep his racial qualities after assimilation, what would the danger of assimilation be?

The case of the Jews, therefore, proves strongly the reasonableness of the attitude assumed in these pages, and, so far from being an exception to the rule advanced,

<sup>1</sup> Ruppin, p. 93. Compare Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto*, p. 83. "But far more vividly did she realize that she was an English girl; far keener than her pride in Judas Maccabæus was her pride in Nelson and Wellington; she rejoiced to find that her ancestors had always beaten the French, from the day of Cressy and Poitiers to the day of Waterloo." ("Ancestors" is delightful.)



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is a most striking and effective example of its validity. The Jewish question is one which will find its own solution, unless unnatural efforts are made to keep up the pretence of Judaistic nationalism. The development of social life in the modern world has not been favourable to the existence of pure races; if nationality depended on race there would be no nationality in Europe to-day. The Jew, in refusing to fight against the process of assimilation, would be recognizing and helping the natural trend of human affairs in the societies in which he lives; he would play a greater and a more effective rôle as Briton, American or German than as Jew, while, on the other hand, these nationalities could not be other than richer and stronger for the blending of the ancient and variegated tradition of this famous people with their own.<sup>1</sup>

To finish on the note with which this chapter was begun. Purity of race is a metaphysical conception, which in practice is found to apply as little to the Jews as to any other people. The Jews, in spite of Ezra and Nehemiah, have always been ready to assimilate with other peoples. That process, as Dr. Ruppin shows, is going on with great rapidity to-day. If the history of the Jews is fatally dependent on their racial characteristics, it must, surely with regret, be admitted that one of the racial characteristics of the Jews is to adopt the racial characteristics of other peoples in the place of their own. Now a racial characteristic is something from which no member of a race can escape. But it is a racial characteristic of the Jews to escape from their racial characteristics; therefore it is a racial characteristic of the Jews to escape from something from which they cannot escape.

The fact is, that the development of a strong sense of

<sup>1</sup> It is very interesting to note that, when the Zionist case was placed before the Council of the Great Powers at the Peace Conference (in February 1919), the speakers emphasized their desire and intention "to build up their national home, not with Jews who are consciously English, French, Polish or Russian, but by Jews who will participate in a revival of Hebrew national consciousness and the Hebrew language." Here it is consciousness of nationality that counts and not race—a subjective and not an objective fact.—See *Daily News*, February 28, 1919.

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organic continuity of common interest made the Jews a peculiar people, a people set apart. As this organic continuity of common interest has been broken up by the multitudes of other interests which have appealed to them during the last two or three centuries, they are losing their national characteristics; and as separate groups of them settle among different communities, each possessing its own special interests, each group is beginning to feel itself organically a sharer in the new interests, and the nationality of the Jew is merged in that of the Englishman or the American citizen. The objective influence of race in the evolution of nationality is a fiction, and the sole foundation or justification of nationality is the recognition of an organic community of interest with other members of a group subjected to the same social and political environment.

This prolonged examination of recent anthropological and ethnological researches, and of the difficulties and absurdities involved in any attempt to settle the question of nationality and national character upon a basis of natural distinctions of endowment between different races of humanity, leads inevitably to the conclusion that to envisage race as an operating objective factor in the evolution of societies is both unscientific and unphilosophical.

It is now more than sixty years since Buckle expressed the view that natural differences in men of different races, though possible, were unproven;<sup>1</sup> and the foregoing inquiry into the results of recent anthropological and ethnological researches has served, we submit, to emphasize Buckle's position by transforming his "possible but unproven" into "impossible and disproven." But it is always unsatisfactory to the emotion of intellectual curiosity to be compelled to acquiesce in a negative conclusion. To have proved that a long-accepted explanation is not an explanation at all is a pleasing achievement only so far as it clears the ground for work towards a more reasonable

<sup>1</sup> *History of Civilization in England*, by Henry Thomas Buckle ("World's Classics"), Vol. I. p. 30, footnote. He says that "inherent natural differences may or may not exist, but most assuredly have never been proved."

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explanation. Nationality, with all its important implications, is a fact which can be neither eluded nor denied; and, if nations are what they are because of the experiences through which they have passed, it seems reasonable to look for the explanation of nationality and national character in the nature of such experiences. If the gaps which separate nations are the results, not of equipment, but of achievement, it is natural to search the records of that achievement for the principle which creates nationality and gives social life and communal sympathies to the individual member of the national agglomeration.\* If we can do this, we shall not only have removed the question from the fatalistic sphere of racial prejudice, but we shall have proved that nationality is a conviction based upon practical realities, upon the facts of historical development, and upon the demands of human experience. The principle of nationality would then no longer stand for an irrational instinct, but for a reasonable sentiment, nay, an argued conviction, as sound and forcible as any other relationship founded upon facts and their rational interpretation. To ascertain whether there is any reasonable basis for this sentiment or conviction is the duty of those who, while recognizing and welcoming the fact of nationality, refuse to find its explanation and justification in any theory of racial character.



## CHAPTER V

If Race not the Basis of Nationality, does Nationality itself disappear?—Nationality founded on Community of Interest—National History founded on Continuity of common Interest—The Operation of this Principle illustrated from contemporary Writers—Sir Mackenzie Wallace and Russia—Mr. J. R. Fisher and Finland—Dr. Brandes and Poland—Mr. J. M. Robertson and *The Evolution of States*: the "Hallucination" of Nationality—Nationality not an Hallucination, but a living Reality founded on History and Reason.

THE considerations adduced in the foregoing chapters appear to lead inevitably to two important conclusions. In the first place, Race as an objective reality cannot be accepted as the foundation of the sentiment or conviction of nationality; and in the second place, any explanation of that widespread and indisputable factor in human development must be sought after, not in a metaphysical theory, but in the actual fields of human experience and achievement. Everywhere to-day we recognize in the forces of nationality mighty instruments towards the progress of human communities; nor can we blind our eyes to the fact that these forces operate to weld into harmonious social and political co-operation peoples of dissimilar racial origins, or to the fact that peoples of the same racial origins are often rendered bitterly hostile to each other by the influence of opposing nationalistic forces.

Both these facts are equally negative of the theory of racial nationality; both alike have their explanation in the records of the experience through which the nation has passed in the course of its historical evolution. History alone explains why the innumerable races in Britain and her Empire to-day constitute one great and inexpugnable nation; why the descendants of the English of the Pale are at present more Irish than British; why Teuton and Celt in France are hostile to Teuton and Celt in Germany; why Teuton and Celt and Slav

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and Jew and the rest are now in process of consolidating that national unity which enabled America to make so effective a demonstration in the Great War. Everywhere we find a specific mark of nationality in the recognition of a common interest; everywhere we find nations separated from even kindred nations by the existence of competing spheres of interest. Where the sentiment or conviction of nationality is weak, we find that the nationalizing process has not succeeded in establishing perfect community of interest, as in the case of Ireland in regard to Great Britain; in Finland as regards Russia; in Alsace as regards Germany; and in other cases which have been the cause of serious concern to the Peace Conference at Versailles, and will probably be the cause of serious concern to the world at large for many generations.

In whatever part of the civilized world we look to-day, we find innumerable examples of the process by which peoples of different race are brought together under one national scheme by community of interest, and in some cases we can perceive the process of assimilation actually taking place. Sir Mackenzie Wallace, whose fascinating book on Russia is generally recognized as the work of a competent and impartial observer, states that during his wanderings in the Northern provinces of Russia he found villages in every stage of Russification.<sup>1</sup> "In one, everything seemed Finnish: the inhabitants had a red, olive skin, very high cheekbones, obliquely set eyes, and a peculiar costume."—"In the fourth, intermarriage had almost completely done its work, and the old Finnish element could be detected merely in certain peculiarities of physiognomy and pronunciation." But it does not require even intermarriage, with its minglings of different domestic associations, to assimilate the social environments of the two races. "The Russians adopted many customs from the Finns, and the Finns adopted still more from the Russians." "A Tchermis, on one occasion, in consequence of a serious illness, sacrificed a young foal to our Lady of Kazan." A small reward offered by

<sup>1</sup> *Russia*, by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O. (Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1905).

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the ecclesiastical authorities to encourage conversion by baptism brought a convert's request for the repetition of the ceremony. "Community of faith led to intermarriage, and intermarriage led rapidly to the blending of the two races"; but it is clear that the blending of religions was the earlier process, a social amalgamation being thus the prelude to a racial admixture, instead of depending upon it. This method of "commingling of atmospheres" is illustrated by the negative example of the Tartar, who does not become Russianized although living in the same villages as the Russians, his Mahometan faith opposing a strong bar to intermarriage with the Infidel. It is extremely interesting to find that, when Sir M. Wallace accepts a difference of race as connected with distinctions in tribal character, it is in a very hesitating and provisional manner, anticipating a time when fuller knowledge will suggest a more reasonable hypothesis. "The Mordvá, for instance, are infinitely less conservative than the Tchuvásh. For the present we must attribute this to some occult ethnological peculiarity, but future investigation may some day supply a more satisfactory explanation. Already I have obtained some facts which appear to throw light on the subject. The Tchuvásh have certain customs which seem to indicate that they were formerly, if not avowed Mahometans, at least under the influence of Islam, whilst we have no reason to suppose that the Mordvá ever passed through that school." In general harmony with the process thus illustrated in detail, Sir M. Wallace accepts the view that the Russian Empire was "in a certain sense" founded by the Normans of Scandinavia, who, in Russia as in France, adopted the language, religion and customs of the Slav population who formed the bulk of their subjects in the kingdoms and principalities they created, thus commingling the various cultures and traditions which are the inheritance of the present-day Russian. In spite of this general Slavization of the Russian, many Finn characteristics survive, and many "Slavs" are indubitably of Finnish descent. The Tartar, on the other hand, and the Slav have not amalgamated. "The Tartars," says Wallace, "never settled in Russia proper, and never amalgamated with



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the native population. So long as they retained their semi-Pagan, semi-Buddhistic religion, a certain number of their notables became Christians, and were absorbed by the Russian *noblesse*, but as soon as the Horde adopted Islam the movement was arrested." And here again we see that difference of race is no bar to a process of assimilation, while that process is immediately stayed when one of the contiguous traditions admits an element which is hostile to admixture except with traditions containing the same element.

These considerations clearly show that, in Russia at any rate, racial distinctions oppose no resistance to the amalgamation of social traditions, and to the consequent assumption of new national characteristics in races supposed to have their characters eternally fixed by the inalienable laws of heredity. It was only when the social tradition itself, and that, too, an extraneous adoption from another tradition, was irreconcilable that the commingling of the different races into a new combination did not occur. In harmony with this eminently sane and practical view Sir M. Wallace explains the love of novelty, the desire for change, characterizing the Russian nobility on the one hand, and the conservatism and social obstinacy of the Russian peasant on the other: a difference of qualities which he explicitly states cannot be imputed to difference of race. "The *noblesse*," he says, "were long ago violently forced out of their old groove by the reforming Tsars, and since that time they have been so constantly driven hither and thither by foreign influences that they have never been able to form a new one; thus they easily enter upon any path which seems to them profitable or attractive. The great mass of the people, too heavy to be thus lifted out of the guiding influence of customs and tradition, are still animated with a strongly conservative spirit." Incidentally, we are told of a colony of Greeks in the neighbourhood of Mariúpol, on the northern shores of the Sea of Azov, who "have almost entirely forgotten their old language, but have preserved their old faith."—"In adopting the Tartar language they have adopted something of Tartar indolence and apathy"; side by side with which, as an evidence of the power of environment and tradition as

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against race, we may place the conclusion drawn by Mr. Brailsford from a general survey of the survival and decadence of Hellenism in the East of Europe. "Where Hellenism is still married to its barren rocks and the waves that cradled it, it lives triumphant and unspoiled. Its decadence is only in the ghettos and bazaars and the breathless city-lanes."<sup>1</sup> Slavism, Hellenism, Germanism and the rest are no appanage of race, but the creation of tradition and social circumstance.<sup>2</sup> Common interest makes common patriotism. In Russia to-day the only power which seems to have any effective national organization at all is that of the Bolsheviks, and that is based, not upon racial or even, in the narrower sense, nationalistic conditions, but on the most pervasive and appealing interest of all, the desire to avenge the economic inequalities inflicted by a capitalistic organization of society.

If we leave Russia proper and glance at two States recently forming parts of the Russian Empire, Finland and Poland, we find that competent observers report numerous facts bearing witness to the dominant importance of environment in forming national character and national institutions. Mr. J. R. Fisher, the author of *Finland and the Tsars*,<sup>3</sup> while establishing the comparative "purity" of the Finnish "race," makes it quite clear that this does not prevent them from succumbing to the power of external influence in many typical expressions of national character. "The Finns clung obstinately and successfully to their nationality and their language, to their songs and their folk-lore; but in their social and political organization, as in their religion, they became virtually a branch of the Scandinavian family." Nor has their identity of race with the Finns of Russia led to any perception, by

<sup>1</sup> Brailsford's *Macedonia*.

<sup>2</sup> Even such "racial" qualities as courage and truthfulness, or cowardice and lying, are products of the social and political environment. Why are Christians in Turkey less truthful than Mahometans? Sir M. Wallace gives the answer: "In a country where the law does not afford protection, the strong man defends himself by his strength, the weak by cunning and duplicity."

<sup>3</sup> *Finland and the Tsars*, 1809-1899, by Joseph R. Fisher, B.A., Barrister-at-Law (London: Edward Arnold, 1899).

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the Finns of Finland, of their Russian nationality. It is well known that the political efforts of Alexander I. in conciliating Finland almost created the atmosphere of a Russian patriotism in the country. He recognized fully that community of interest is the sole basis of nationality, and that community of interest can be created by favourable modifications of the social environment. "My object," he wrote in 1810, "in organizing the situation in Finland, has been to give to the people a political existence, so that they shall not regard themselves as subject to Russia, but attached to her by their own evident interests, and for this reason, not only their civil laws, but also their political laws, have been retained." The truth of the affirmative position is again corroborated by a negative example. The reversal of Alexander's policy by later Tsars, under the inspiration of "the fanatical Moscow party, with its policy of compulsory Russification," and its necessary strengthening of the sense of opposing interest between the Finns and the Russians, has led at length to entire national separation between the two countries.

In Poland, too, the situation admits of a similar diagnosis.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Brandes emphasizes the well-known fact that a common Slavism in Russia and Poland has no unifying effect whatever, whereas a difference of religion presents an adamant bar to amalgamation. "Between the Pole and the Russian rises the barrier of religion, the most powerful factor in the life of this country." In Poland the Catholic religion is indissolubly bound up with the national cause, and, says Dr. Brandes, "without the influence of the Catholic clergy it would have been impossible to keep the larger part of the population, which is excluded from the higher culture, firmly united as a nationality." National patriotism, therefore, is so little a matter of race, with its burden of invariable and inevitable characteristics, that, like any other virtue, it can be taught through the intelligence of the cultured and the emotions of the ignorant. And this teaching of patriotism is carried out in all the details of a child's education and training.

<sup>1</sup> *Poland: a Study of the Land, People and Literature*, by George Brandes (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1903).



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"Everything which the child hears in the first years of his life strengthens this hatred and contempt for the Russians." Other national characteristics can also be taught. "The prejudice against work is impressed upon the young by the old," just as in England from time immemorial the "hereditary tendency to drink" has been perpetuated as part of the social tradition of successive generations. Finally we may quote as an illustration of the nationalizing value of culture and tradition a pregnant observation of Bismarck's—"experience teaches that a Polish wife makes her husband a Polish patriot in the twinkling of an eye. In future no Prussian Pole is to be allowed to settle in Posen unless he has married a German wife; for only in this event can there be any hope of Germanizing him and his children."

These various facts, gathered almost at random from a number of writers claiming special acquaintance with the communities they describe and marked by different political views and social sympathies, may, perhaps, be accepted as illustrating what the author means by that community of interest in which he himself sees a solution of the question. It is his view that community of interest creates national feeling, and that continuity of common interest creates national history. It seems clear from the facts as so far examined that in the principle of organic continuity of common interest we can find at once an explanation and a justification of the phenomena of nationality as they exist in modern, and have existed in ancient, history. Such, at any rate, is the principle which it is proposed to examine and illustrate in the succeeding pages of this book; and first of all the writer would wish to establish his view as against those who, having repudiated the racial basis of nationality, contend that they have at the same time destroyed nationality itself.

The most brilliant representative of this school of thought, in England or elsewhere, is Mr. J. M. Robertson, whose reputation as a politician and administrator has placed the crown upon his long career as an original thinker and a powerful writer.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Robertson main-

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of States; An Introduction to English Politics*, by J. M. Robertson (Watts & Co., 1912).

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tains that as there is no racial conscience, no racial achievement, no racial genius, so there is no national conscience, no national achievement, no national genius; explanations of "national character" are merely scholastic disputations about nothing; fantastic lucubrations like those indulged in by the ecclesiastical schoolmen who wasted five hundred good years of human effort over the non-existent abstractions of pseudo-Aristotelian philosophy. On a previous page it has been suggested that, were there no such thing as nationality or national character, it would be necessary to revise all our conceptions of human development and to rewrite all our histories of human progress. Mr. Robertson does not shrink from this conclusion, and with admirable boldness and consistency sets out to rewrite human history accordingly. With Mr. Robertson's condemnation of the pride of racial nationality it is impossible not to agree. But the writer regrets that he is not able to follow him when he unites in the same condemnation the "instinct" of racial pride with the conception of national solidarity.<sup>1</sup> When he says that "the principle of nationality stands in large part for an irrational instinct, if not for a positive hallucination," we agree with the statement as a criticism of the racial instinct which so many people conceive to underlie the principle of nationality; but when he adds, "the nation, considered as a continuous and personalized organism, is in large measure a metaphysical dream,"<sup>2</sup> we cannot accept his position, unless the word "personalized" is used in a literal sense, a sense in which even the racial extremists do not use it. Mr. Robertson criticizes Comte and Buckle for making history a "Jonsonian masque of personified abstractions," and is severe with

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of States*, p. 260. "We have seen how erudite specialists can express themselves in terms of the fallacy of racial genius. Specialists perhaps as erudite, and certainly multitudes of educated people, seem capable of thinking as positively in terms of the hallucinations of racial entity, *national consciousness*, political greatness, national revenue and imperial success." (Italics not Mr. Robertson's). See also p. 251 of *An Introduction to English Politics* (1900), an earlier version of *The Evolution of States*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Evolution of States*, p. 258. "Essentially a metaphysical dream" in the *Introduction to English Politics* (p. 252).

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Lord Bryce because, by an easy and natural analogy, he personifies Rome, and speaks of that State as "she" and "her."<sup>1</sup> We do not score a merely verbal point when we observe that Mr. Robertson alludes to Venice and Florence and other States under the same feminine personal pronoun;<sup>2</sup> the practice simply illustrates how natural and easy it is to use a personalizing metaphor when speaking of national or political aggregations; and no criticism which Mr. Robertson has directed on this ground against two historical writers out of every three but is directed with equal propriety against himself. He charges Taine with missing the truth when he speaks of the French nation as "we," in indicating the failure of that people to find a constitution which suited them. "At no moment were all of the French people consenting parties to any one of the thirteen constitutions. Then there was no collective failure."<sup>3</sup> But surely no one can deny that it is a common interest of all Frenchmen to find a constitution which suits them, since they all individually are affected by it, as they have to live under it; and the failure of each one of the thirteen constitutions was surely due to the mental attitude assumed towards it by Frenchmen in general. All wanted a constitution that all could live under as Frenchmen. That general or collective need is not nullified because each of the thirteen attempts only satisfied it in part: that they failed proves rather that they were partial, and the fact that they were partial proves the existence of a general demand; in other words, of a national demand.

In a really attractive passage Mr. Robertson tells us how, "in the story of Hellas, Sparta stands almost alone among the peoples as yielding no foothold to the life of the mind, bare of nearly all memory of beauty, indigent in all that belongs to the spirit, morally sterile as steel."<sup>4</sup> And then we have Sparta as a whole charged with "a spirit of peculiar separateness and arrogance," as an example of which is given the legal prohibition of native Spartans to go abroad without

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of States*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208 (Florence), p. 205 (Pisa), p. 229 (Venice), and numerous other places.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.



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special leave.<sup>1</sup> But the fact that legal prohibition was necessary proves that all Spartans did not share in the spirit of arrogance to that extent, as, indeed, we know from other sources to have been the case. But why M. Taine should be described as missing the truth when he speaks of France in the same collective way as Mr. Robertson speaks of Sparta, it is indeed difficult to understand.

Mr. Robertson speaks elsewhere of the "wincing sense of humiliation and disgrace felt by multitudes of a great aggregate over military repulses at the hands of extremely small and primitive groups," and the humiliation and disgrace is admittedly a "collective" emotion.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to see that in this connexion there is anything more than a verbal distinction between saying that "a great aggregate" is humiliated by defeat and saying that "a great nation" is humiliated by defeat. When we say that this "collective emotion" is wrongly based upon racial pride we do not get away from the fact of the emotion; we only suggest that it may have a more rational justification. Mr. Robertson is anxious to indicate the organic connexion of all social processes in different countries; but it seems an unhappy way of starting to find the organic connexion of these processes in different countries with a denial of their organic connexion in the same country.

It appears, therefore, that while Mr. Robertson rightly condemns the conception of *racial genius* as determining nationality, he is too severe in his repudiation of that general organic unity and continuity which furnish a reasonable explanation and justification for the nationalistic conception. We are grateful to Mr. Robertson for the phrase in which he repudiates "the nation considered as a continuous organism,"<sup>3</sup> because it is just in that very continuity of national life that we recognize the principle which gives meaning to

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of States*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262-3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258, Part V. chap. i. "The Ideas of Nationality and National Greatness." This chapter, which contains a brief but clear and cogent statement of Mr. Robertson's general position, explicitly identifies racial pride with national pride, an identification implied, even when not expressed, throughout the rest of the book.

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history, and makes national consciousness inevitable and, within proper limits, justifiable. Mr. Robertson himself rewrites history under the old titles, "Rome," "Greece," "Italy," "Anglo-Saxon England," etc., etc., and each chapter, under its separate title, gives an account of the continuous evolutionary process represented by the historical events dealt with. Each chapter is a lesson in national continuity, which is only saying that events in national history do not happen at random or *in vacuo*. When we treat of the separate histories of nations it is because the nations have separate histories; separate histories are separate histories because they exhibit separate characteristics, *i. e.* separate series of relationships between the mind of the people and its environment. And if you define history as the record of the operation of social processes, mental, moral and material, as Mr. Robertson defines it, upon what principle are you to deny the fact that a group of human personalities, subjected to the operation of the same social processes, takes a collective interest in their effect upon itself, and in its effect upon them? The history of every people represents a separate stream of continuity of national life; and the national adjective, English, French, etc., which signifies separateness from other peoples signifies also continuity and identity of interest for the people it includes. That the adjectives are not always scientifically accurate in their connotation, or ethically just in their implication, does not alter the substantial truth of the position: they signify different groupings of national continuity. If, in accordance with Ratzel's theory, we explain, as it seems clear we must explain, the differences between the Hottentot and the Frenchman by the difference between the effect produced upon the natural endowment by a primitive and savage environment on the one hand, and an intricate, elaborate and highly civilized environment on the other, then also must we explain the differences between Frenchman and German, between Germans and English, by an argument which recognizes the differences between the environments of peoples all highly civilized. So far as the environment of European peoples has been different, it follows that

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to that extent their character as a people must be different, and the mystery would be to find them the same. There is no question here of heredity. No historical European community has had a long enough record to develop any fundamental physical variation, let alone any mental variation, which could become part of the hereditary stock of the people. Historical times, at any rate, have witnessed no alteration in the intellectual or moral character of a people as handed down by racial heredity. It is quite possible to admit that the cerebral convolutions of a modern professor of sociology are more complicated and delicate than those of a scholastic divine of the twelfth century, although one is driven to admit a family resemblance between them when one recalls the exquisite piece of casuistry by which Mr. Norman Angell proves that physical force is not physical force when it is only used to repel physical force.<sup>1</sup> It is even easy to admit that the whole of the present generation of educated Europeans possess brains of superior physical structure and intellectual power as compared with their predecessors of a thousand years ago. But to admit this is not to imply that the modern superiority is the result of a gradually accumulating series of improvements which have been impressed upon the brains of one generation after another until they were finally handed down by heredity. No, the hereditary anatomy has remained the same; the natural intellectual capacity has not been racially modified; but we have from our birth upwards been accustomed to exercise our wits upon so much more complicated a world of material that superiority of intellectual power is *acquired* from more active and subtle cerebral exercise. Each succeeding generation does not hand down to its successors a superior brain; but it hands down the *acquisitions* and *achievements* of its own brain, the result of its co-operation with the environment, hands them down, not by hereditary descent, but by historical tradition. And it also hands down the acquisitions and achievements of the generations that preceded it: each succeeding generation

<sup>1</sup> *War and the Essential Realities* (Conway Memorial Lecture, 1913), pp. 36 *sqq.* (London: Watts & Co.).



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having thus a larger, richer, broader, deeper environment than its predecessors. And with this progressive change of intellectual and moral development our character, as a generation, exhibits aspects and qualities which differentiate it from previous generations, although it is an inevitable result of the process of tradition that there is sameness and continuity as well as diversity and development. We use the same tools, but we polish them by use to a greater perfection, and we work on a more various and complicated material. And we produce different results, learning ever more expert and delicate ways of using our material.<sup>1</sup> The skill which built barrows is educated by the environment into the skill which builds cathedrals; and the power to scratch the figures of living animals upon the bones of dead ones becomes the power to paint Madonnas or post-impressionist pictures.

These considerations, we think, serve to explain the similarity of character that marks the growth of an historic nation; and they also explain the differences which develop from generation to generation. So that, while we recognize the differences between Shakespeare's England and Milton's England and Shelley's England, it is Shakespeare's and Milton's and Shelley's England all the time, and it is our own England as well.

And, finally, these considerations furnish a reasonable explanation for the existence of the phenomenon of nationality. A nation arises when for a considerable time, allied by kin or not, people have been subjected to the same general environment. This identity of environment operates upon the natural capacity of the people so as to produce results in which they have a common interest. A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind. A general tradition is formed, and gathers strength; other groups, from various causes, may

<sup>1</sup> "The Russian Dvoryanin easily learned the language and assumed the manners of the French "gentilhomme," and succeeded in changing his physical and intellectual exterior; but all those deeper and more delicate parts of human nature which are formed by the accumulated experience of past generations could not be so easily and rapidly changed."—Sir M. Wallace (*Russia*).

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be brought within the same sphere of interest; the nation grows and strengthens, and the process of traditionary consolidation begins and continues in the manner described. The common environment, in co-operation with the common intellectual and moral capacity, creates a community of interest, and, in proportion to the strength of this common interest in the common tradition and the common achievement, the national life is vividly felt and strongly expressed. It follows from this that nations may exist within nations; that Wales and Scotland and Ireland may be legitimately conscious of their nationality; because within the sphere of the wider British interest they nourish their own special national tradition. Hence the wisdom of the Liberal recognition of Welsh nationality, and the doubt which one feels as to the wisdom of compelling North-East Ulster to share in the national tradition of Ireland, in preference to the national tradition of England, which its people are the more keenly conscious of.

It follows, therefore, that nationality is not an hallucination, not a metaphysical conception, but an institution based upon practical realities, upon the facts of historical development, and upon the demands of human experience. The principle of nationality stands no longer for an irrational instinct; the feeling of national solidarity is a reasonable sentiment—nay, an argued conviction—as sound and forcible as any other relationship based upon organic community and continuity of interest. Continuity of national character is a natural and intelligible process, and is due to the fact that the mental environment, the social, political, literary, artistic, religious and philosophical tradition of one generation in the series becomes the subject-matter of the intelligence, the mental activity, of the next generation, which in its turn adds something, smaller or greater, to the current which then flows onward, constantly deepening and broadening, but retaining for the whole period of the national existence some portion of the environment of habit and custom which surrounded its source. The use which the national genius makes of the national tradition stamps

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the character of the national life of the period. It may accept the tradition in an entirely acquiescent spirit; it may combine it and re-combine it in forms of startling novelty; it may repudiate and neglect this part or seize with grateful eagerness upon another part; it may approve the wisdom or expose the folly of this or that constituent element. To one part it may apply daring courage; to another part cautious prudence; here it will be conservative, there revolutionary; but all its actions and attitudes will be stamped by a broad similarity, due to the fact that all are members of the community, all have been cradled in the common tradition, have been steeped in it from their birth, have learned their earliest and most lasting lessons from it, have sharpened their tools of wit and satire upon it, and have learned from it the habit of criticizing and even repudiating it.

And herein lies the secret of why, with all their fundamental similarities, no two successive generations are ever exactly alike. The constantly accruing differences in the national tradition furnish new fields of exercise to the national intellect, and since national character is the result of the interaction of the national genius and the national environment, it follows that any accretion to the environment brings with it a fresh development of character. Hence it happens that a nation, even apart from those foreign influences which are most effective in developing national character, owing to the new material they bring into the national environment—even apart from these, a nation may exhibit a continuously progressive development towards a fuller and richer life. Nature, fond as she is of stamping a uniform type upon the species, can never lose her fecundity of individual differences. The play of intellect upon environment within the limits of the national genius operates to produce delicate distinctions in the manipulation of the same material, which, seized upon by other minds in the community, may produce results profoundly modifying the general character of the environment. We can see this principle operating even in the most primitive communities. "Among the Kayans and other peoples (of Borneo) sceptics are to



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be found, and as no inquisitorial methods are in vogue among them, such persons will on occasion give expression to their doubts about the accepted dogmas, although speech about such topics is generally repressed by some touch of awe. One man, for example, argued in our hearing that he could hardly believe that man continues to exist after death, for, said he, if men and women still lived after death, some of those who had been very fond of their children would surely return to see them, and would in some way be perceived by the living. But all such discussions are usually terminated by the remark 'Nusi jam?' (Who knows?)."<sup>1</sup> This spontaneous exhibition of scepticism in the very bosom of the nurturing orthodox tradition is, as we know, capable not only of modifying the religion of a race, but its entire outlook upon the facts of life and the uses to which it applies its knowledge. So true is it that Nature plants a principle of difference in the very citadel of uniformity.

An isolated self-centred nation, if such were possible, need not, therefore, be a stationary unprogressive nation. Given Nature's universal endowment of energy and inquisitiveness, most of the theoretical and practical problems of life would be solved in time, and the national character might develop rapidly from stage to stage, until a high standard of achievement and a complex degree of civilization had been obtained. Every person in a community forms part of the environment of every other person; and Nature varies the individual almost *ad infinitum*. But, after all, the main factors in the progress of a nation have been those great accretions to its environment effected by the interminglings of other national civilizations with its own, and it is to an account of our own national history in this respect that it is proposed to turn for further light upon the subject of these studies.

<sup>1</sup> The precise reference to this interesting passage has, unfortunately, been lost. It is taken from a volume of travels in Borneo, published about 1912.

## CHAPTER VI

The Progress of Civilization dependent upon progressive Complexity of the social Tradition, not upon progressive Complexity of hereditary racial Endowment—Mixture of Races means Commingling of social Traditions—The earliest Communities in Britain—The Commingling of Traditions as shown by the Study of Ethnology—The Celts a highly composite People—The Process of Commingling of Traditions continued by the Roman Occupation and the Anglo-Saxon Invasion—Continuity of Tradition from prehistoric to historical Times.

THE view thus propounded that the increasing wealth, vigour and refinement of social achievement are due to the growing complexity of the social environment acting upon a mental endowment which, so far as racial heredity is concerned, is practically constant and unvarying, suggests an explanation of human progress at once more natural, reasonable and consistent than any given by the racial theories which we have hitherto examined. While it is free, on the one hand, from the absurdity of envisaging the "unchangeable soul of a people" as serenely, if stubbornly, superior to all the flood of environmental experience which rolls in vain about its everlasting pedestal, maintaining its "racial purity" unsoiled by contact with mundane concerns, like some Epicurean god on its Olympian hill: it is not, on the other hand, liable to the charge that it shatters the gradual continuity of natural evolution by assigning sudden changes of national character to equally sudden changes in the hereditary structure of the national brain. Such is the native adaptability of the general human endowment that immediate vicissitudes of experience can evoke immediate responses in the subject mind: a result not less natural in a community than daily occurrences show it to be in the individual citizen. Fresh national experiences create new phases of national character, which disappear when they have survived

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the emergency that provoked them. Indeed, the progress of social development would be as intolerably tedious as it is now inconceivably rapid were it dependent upon the acquisition of new hereditary capacities to cope with a constantly varying environment; and all the processes of civilization would be hampered by the constant sense of dis-harmony which would be felt when social changes left the newly-acquired hereditary gift in the lurch. It is, therefore, both natural and reasonable to envisage social and political progress as depending upon a constantly changing environment, affecting, and being in turn affected by, a physical and mental endowment whose powers, while constant and equable, are readily adaptable to hitherto untried external conditions.

And not only is this view more reasonable and natural, but it gives an entirely fresh charm and significance to the commingling of peoples, which has hitherto been one of the most wearisome and perplexing problems of sociology. The commingling of peoples presents no longer the inextricable problem of ascertaining how far the "hereditary racial qualities" of two mixed communities were involved in the combination: a problem which, in no single case, has been solved in the same way by any two inquirers. Instead of having to guess at the answer to this fantastic and really insoluble conundrum, we are faced with the more intelligent and interesting task of investigating the historical environments, the traditional cultures, of the commingling communities, and tracking the current of their development in the new conditions resulting from the amalgamation of previously separated social organizations. We turn from riddles to realities; from Fate to Freedom. If human life is a drama, it is Euripidean rather than Æschylean. Individuals and communities are not the victims of an inscrutable and ineluctable fate, but intelligent as well as sentient beings, active as well as passive organisms, whose energies are motivated by conscious purpose and directed to voluntary and, therefore, ethical ends. If man is moulded by his environment, he moulds it in his turn; and, indeed, it is a patent fact that a highly important



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factor in any man's environment is supplied by the material, intellectual and moral activities of the persons with whom he comes into contact; whose actions inspire him, whose books instruct him, whose artistic creations soothe and elevate him. The comedy or tragedy of human life consists in the play and interplay of human interests based upon human motives; racial fatalism, with its summary cutting of the knot it cannot loosen, is an artificial erection, a *deus ex machina*, fit only for Euripidean sarcasm.

It is from this point of view that the writer now proposes to describe the development of nationality and national character in his native country, although he hopes to tell the story in such a way as to make it clear that he is illustrating a general principle of human evolution operating in every community, and applicable to every sphere of social, political, economic and artistic activity.

Whether or not new blood introduces new national qualities, it is certain that those who have the new blood introduce a new environment, and the first requisite, in studying the character of an admittedly mixed people like the English, is to ascertain the nature of the elements which at an early stage of our history combined to lay the historical foundations of our people. We must first, therefore, summarize for our own purposes some well-known facts as to the various peoples who have met together on British soil, less with a view to emphasizing the different elements in our blood than to suggesting the number of different environments which have combined to form that in which we now live.

There are some writers who think that they have solved the question of the evolution of the English national character when they say, as Grant Allen and many others say, that in blood any given modern Englishman is a joint product of the Saxon and the Celt, whose respective characters they describe with great confidence and an abundance of minute detail.<sup>1</sup> But even the most cautious ethnologists assert that neither British Celt nor British Anglo-Saxon was of

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Britain*, by Grant Allen, p. 70.

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pure descent. Grant Allen himself knew that the Celts mixed largely in Britain "with one or more long-skulled, dark-haired, black-eyed, and brown-complexioned races,"<sup>1</sup> and recent anthropological researches have amplified the bearing of these remarks. It is really surprising to find how many separate peoples have been contributory sources to our national environment. Even if we disregard the fascinating possibility that Palæolithic man, who inhabited these islands at the close of the Quaternary period, some 80,000 years ago, left representatives to meet and mingle with the earliest invaders of the New Stone Age, it is certain that an unbroken continuity of occupation, and, therefore, of tradition, has been maintained here since the beginning of the Neolithic period, which is placed by Palæontological experts at not later than 10,000 years ago. People after people has entered the country, each with its own special tradition or environment the result of its own previous history, and has formed a living link in the continuous chain of national development—*et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt*.

First came, and probably from Gaul, the so-called Iberians, who originally dwelt in caves, and who have left their long barrows in Britain and their sepulchral caverns in France and Spain. They were a short, dark, long-headed race, with oval faces, regular features and fragile frames, and, with the possible exception of Palæolithic survivals, were in sole occupation of Britain during the greater part of the New Stone Age. Dr. Thurnam is of opinion that they belonged to the same stock as the Spanish Basques, and Dr. Isaac Taylor, who accepts Thurnam's conclusion, gives them African relationships, and states that they are represented to-day, not only by the Spanish Basques, but also by the Corsicans and some inhabitants of Wales and Ireland. Towards the close of the New Stone Age these were followed by a tall and strong, red-haired, round-headed folk, who dwelt in huts and knew the use of metals. They built the round barrows in England, and left their graves in Belgium, Gaul and Denmark. Their affinities are

<sup>1</sup> Grant Allen, p. 56.

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Ugrie, and to the same race are assigned the modern Danes and Slavs, as well as some of the modern Irish. These were the first Aryan-speaking people of Britain. Prof. Rolleston describes them as of the "Turanian" type, while Prüner-Bey classes them as "Mongoloid."<sup>1</sup> They had probably expelled the oval-faces from Gaul, and then followed them eventually into Britain, there to mingle their blood and their civilization. Then came members of the so-called "Scandinavian" race, the tall, long-headed people of the Row Graves and the Kitchen Middens, with light hair, blue eyes and white skin, the fathers, it is said, especially of the modern Frisians and the fair North German folk. Then we find people with forms of milder cast, the people of the so-called Alpine or Ligurian race, with broad heads and black hair, and related to the Lapps and Finns. To-day we find people like them, said by the ethnologists to be their descendants, in Savoy, Auvergne and Switzerland. All these invaded Britain in the Neolithic Age, all intermarrying at last and intermingling, the latest with the earliest and with the intermediate arrivals. These were the people of Britain before ever a Celt in the historic sense came nearer than Gaul.

Upon these curiously intermingled races came at last the Celtic Invasion: the Celts of European history, who are known to have been formed of three great tribes called Celts, Goidels and Brythons, who mingled freely with each other, and had also intermingled with two already intermingled Neolithic tribes in Gaul. These were the people who, establishing themselves in Britain, and intermarrying with the mixed peoples already there, formed the so-called Celts of Britain, who faced the Roman legions which Julius Cæsar brought with him before the commencement of the Christian Era. "Everywhere in Britain," says Dr. Rice Holmes, "the pre-Roman stocks have in greater or less proportion survived. Few Englishmen or Scotsmen, if their pedigrees could be traced back far enough, would not be found to contain among their ancestors men of the type who were buried in long

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Taylor, *Origin of the Aryans*, p. 70.



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barrows, sturdy warriors of the Bronze Age, and Celts who fought against Cæsar or were subdued by Agricola.”<sup>1</sup>

At this point in the long story the so-called “history of England” begins, and the tale of foreign intrusions becomes more complicated still. The influence of the Roman Conquest in modifying the environment of all the peoples the Empire reduced beneath her sway is easily admitted in its broad and striking lines. But if we glance at some of its less conspicuous details its operation becomes more striking still. What of the special environmental influence exercised by the long list of Roman subject peoples who garrisoned our shores in settled military colonies, and who, beneath the outside show of civilization and military discipline, represented less the environment of Rome than that of some semi-savage tribe? We have, *e.g.* Sarmatians in Essex, Tungrians at Dover, Spaniards at Pevensey, Belgians at Reculver, Stablesians (from Germany) at Burgh Castle, Dalmatians in Lincolnshire, Pannonians at Doncaster, an African tribe at Moresby, the Nervii at Ambleside, Cilicians at Greta Bridge, Portuguese at Pierce Bridge, more Belgians at Wallsend, Asturians at Benwell, Quadi, Marcomanni and Dacians, Moors and Thracians elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Is it possible to imagine that these representatives of various degrees of tribal civilization did not add to the complexity of the environment of the native British people? And what is probable with regard to the military element introduced by Rome is equally so of the commercial and professional. “Not only the numbers,” says Dr. Hodgkin, “but the nationality of these vanished dwellers by the Tyne and Irthing strike us by their

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient Britain and the Invasions of Julius Cæsar*, by T. Rice Holmes (Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> The particulars in the text are from the *Notitia Imperii*, “composed under Theodosius the Younger, and, therefore, at the close of the Roman domination in Britain.” The identification of the localities is not certain in all the cases quoted. “We must not imagine that they were bodies of troops in temporary quarters which could be changed at pleasure, for inscriptions . . . show us that they had remained in the same place from a very early period of the Roman occupation of the island.”—*The Celt, the Roman and the Saxon*, by Thomas Wright (London: Virtue & Co., 1852).

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strange contrast with the present. Besides the Asturian and Dalmatian soldiers, there must have been merchants and money-lenders and camp-followers of all kinds, speaking many tongues, upon these wind-swept moorlands. In the museum at South Shields is a sepulchral monument representing a woman seated, holding in her right hand a jewel-box, in her left implements of needlework. Underneath is a bilingual inscription, telling us in Latin that the figure represents 'Regina, freedwoman, and wife of Barate the Palmyrene, herself of the (British) nation of the Catuallauni, who died at the age of thirty.' In characters akin to Hebrew, the Oriental part of the inscription says simply, 'Regina, the freedwoman of Barate. Alas!' The blended nationality, the British girl bought, enfranchised, loved and too soon lost by the Syrian—merchant perchance or usurer—who followed the flight of the eagles of Rome"—these elements of human interest in an experience which cannot have been an isolated incident point to the manner in which the environment of the British peoples was modified by the foreign elements introduced by the Roman conquest and occupation of these Islands.<sup>1</sup>

But the story is still far from finished. Coming to our more immediate invaders, the so-called Anglo-Saxons, we are told as the fruit of the latest research that the three national names of Angles, Saxons and Jutes were not the names of nations even in the fairly wide modern sense of the term, but were rather convenient designations for confederations of tribes, the Angles being one confederation, the Saxons another, and the Jutes a third. Among these invaders were found, not only Angles (who were probably Scandinavians), Saxons and Jutes, but also Danes, Frisians, Rugians, Hunsings, Boructers, Goths and Vandals. The Frisians were Batavians, like the Dutch of to-day. The Vandals were not even Teutonic, but Slavonic, as also were the Rugians, the Wilte (the county Wilts has thus a Vandal, a Slavonic name), the Finns, the

<sup>1</sup> *The Political History of England*, by Thos. Hodgkin, D.C.L., Litt.D. (Longmans, 1906), Vol. I. pp. 57-8. Dr. Hodgkin dates the *Notitia* (see last note) "probably about the year 402" (p. 69).

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Lechs and other peoples with ugly prognathous skulls. Kent, in many respects the very heart of England, and historically pre-eminent for its determined and typically "Anglo-Saxon" passion for liberty, owes that characteristic to the tradition of no English tribe, but to the Goths; and the tracks of those notorious disturbers of social peace, the Vandals and the Huns, can be followed to this day in many place-names whose modern variations do not disguise their original meaning.<sup>1</sup> For Philology lends its support to these conclusions of the ethnologist. "There is," says Professor Marsh, "linguistic evidence of a great commingling of nations in the body of intruders."<sup>2</sup> They, too, with their already composite mass of tradition, inherited from many different sources, brought with them a character and a culture to mingle with the character and the culture already established here, the result of the mingling traditions of many invading or indigenous tribes. Many individual members of the Romanized British community perished, or left the country for the neighbouring coast of France; here and there a city population was massacred;<sup>3</sup> but as a whole the previous inhabitants survived in immediate intermingling with the invaders, or in retirement to the remoter western parts of the Island, where they retained their peculiar culture intact until the progress of social amenity opened the way to a larger "Celtic" influence upon the English

<sup>1</sup> "It is worthy of note here that John Ball, Wat Tyler, Jack Cade, and other agitators began their careers in Kent, the county in which the first Teutonic settlements were made, and, therefore, it must be presumed, the part of England where the Anglo-Saxon spirit was most fully developed in early times."—*The Anglo-Saxon: a Study in Evolution*, by George E. Boxall (Grant Richards, 1902).

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures on the English Language*, by George P. Marsh (London: Sampson Low & Co., 1861), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> For what took place at Exeter and London see *London before the Conquest*, by W. R. Lethaby (Macmillan, 1902), p. 24. Cf. Sir Stanley Leathes: "It was easy to drive such a peaceful crowd from their holdings; it was easy also to let them stay and make them work that they might supply with beef and bread and beer proud men of war who thought it beneath their dignity to follow the plough."—"The People of England," by Sir Stanley Leathes, K.C.B., M.A., *The People in the Making*, p. 35 (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1915). The safest conclusion seems to be that the extermination of the British, like the death of the American wit, was "greatly exaggerated."



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character. The Anglo-Saxon, too, was but a runner in the Lucretian torch race of the generations; he passed down to his descendants, and to the descendants of those whom he joined here when he came, the heritage of custom, character, culture, tradition, which he had himself received from many predecessors of different tribal origins. We all know what has happened since he came. Danes and Normans, Flemings and Frenchmen, Italians and Spaniards, foreigners from every quarter of the globe, have each in turn contributed some portion of their separate qualities and achievements to enrich the environment and to develop the character of our far-descended, widely recruited people.

It has not, of course, been possible to accompany this list of the various inhabitants and invaders of Britain with a detailed description of the traditional culture they separately brought with them to form part of the common stock. The absence of written records in the case of the pre-Roman peoples reduces our knowledge of their social achievements to what can be guessed from an examination of their tools and their graves, even when these are available. To elicit from such crude and primitive materials a complete theory of social development would be a task worthy of the Laputan projector who tried to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. Such a theory can only be based upon the careful study of historical records accumulated through many generations of social effort and achievement. There are, no doubt, possibilities of interesting discoveries even if we keep off the main tracks of historical evolution. Just as we can believe the ethnologists when they tell us that some of the strange facial characters found among our people are those of Neolithic or even Palæolithic tribes, so it is possible that some of the fantastic beliefs and customs, so alien to our civilization, or to any civilization at all, which linger in out-of-the-way places, or even at times affect the cultured city-dweller, may have been handed down from generation to generation in an unbroken chain whose first link was forged by the savage tribes from whom we sprang. The unwritten superstitions, the haunting fear of the unknown in Nature, which are cherished by the firesides of remote

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villages on wold and in dale, in combe or glen, may, perhaps, be the heritage of a folk-memory stretching to an almost illimitable distance in the past.<sup>1</sup> But these fancies are, perhaps, but playthings for the curious student of the quaint and the bizarre. Even the traces left upon our native character by the direct contact of Roman civilization are not marked with sufficient clearness to be followed with any expectation of success in our immediate purpose;<sup>2</sup> and Rome at a later date, as a metropolis and not as a province, was to pour into our national life the full flood of her ripest, if resuscitated, splendours. To the story of this we shall come in due time by following the broad track of our historical evolution, which happily commences with sufficient, though not perfect, clearness from the time when a Roman historian himself directed his attention to those German tribes who were even then, as we shall see, laying the foundations of English nationality and national character; a character and a nationality happily destined to be moulded by different influences from those affecting the tribes who remained in their ancient home, to become in our own time the enemies of the human race.

<sup>1</sup> "It is a strange but recognized fact in ethnology that the members of a victorious race, even when moderately civilized, are prone to destroy existing art and culture, whilst unconsciously imbibing the superstitions of their forerunners on the soil."—*Folk-Memory*, by Walter Johnson, F.G.S. (Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> "It is certain that many of our common habits still inherit something from the Romans."—Sir Stanley Leathes, *The People in the Making*, p. 37.

## CHAPTER VII

The Environment of the English Nation—Elements which have combined to its Formation—The Anglo-Saxon Invaders—The "Germans" of Tacitus—The Reliability of his Account; his Subjectivity less evident in the *Germania* than elsewhere in his Writings—His Description of the German Land and the German Peoples in the Second Century: Their Characteristics due to Environment, not to Race: transmitted by Tradition, not by Heredity—In them we find a Starting-point of the English National Character—Future Developments due to the Commingling of Environments.

WE do not think it can reasonably be denied that, however important the elements contributed to our national character by pre-Saxon occupants of Britain, the most pervasive and compelling influence in our environment is that furnished by the conquering bands of raiders and settlers who formed the "Anglo-Saxon" Invasion. As a starting-point for our further investigations, therefore, it will be convenient to ascertain whether any general character can be assigned to the conglomeration of peoples who were responsible for that event. If we can ascertain what was the character they exhibited before their settlement of England, it will not be difficult to show how it was modified by the various environments with which it came into contact in Britain. However varied in race the invaders may have been, there is no doubt that the bulk of them must have been of Teutonic stock. They came from that "Germany" whose inhabitants, according to Tacitus, were united by the common worship of the "earth-born god, Tuisco," and whose general characteristics were described by the Roman historian not long before they began to make raids on the "Saxon shore." That Celtic and even Slavonic tribes were in occupation of some portions of the "*Germania*" of Tacitus does not destroy the general validity of his description of them as Teutons, and it is here, if any-



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where, we must look for our earliest reliable account of the Teutonic element in our ancestry.

We need not enter minutely into the eternal disputes affecting the general credibility of Tacitus as an historian, and the particular purpose with which he wrote his work. It will be enough if we merely refer to the view which would discount its value as an historical record. "Tacitus," says Guizot, "has painted the Germans, as Montaigne and Rousseau the savages, in a fit of ill-humour against his country." But to admit this is not to admit that the ill-humour was unjust or unfounded. Tacitus, like every other historian of strong views and originality of character, nay, like every other human being who has a story to tell, colours the facts that he narrates. But the colouring does not falsify the facts, it merely falsifies his view of them and the deductions he draws from them. Sir William Ashton, in the two varying reports which he wrote for his Government on the conduct of young Ravenswood in *The Bride of Lammermuir*, is represented as describing the actual facts in both accounts; it is the colouring he gives them which makes one report a eulogy and the other a condemnation. But the impartial critic can dissociate the facts from the subjective tendencies of the reporter's mind, and can use the facts for more legitimate purposes than to advance a friend or ruin an enemy as occasion may require. Moreover, if Tacitus wrote the *Germania* in a fit of dissatisfaction with Rome, it is just possible that the facts fed his dissatisfaction rather than that his dissatisfaction invented the facts. The close and constant study to which Tacitus has been subjected since the Renaissance has informed the critics of every twist and turn of his subjectivity, showing exactly what sort of event it must really have been for Tacitus to have coloured it so, how things must have actually been for Tacitus to have described them with that bias. And, moreover, it is easier to do this with the *Germania* than with any other of the writings of Tacitus. Here he is less rhetorical than elsewhere; less the victim of his peculiar vein of gloomy satire; more given to the narration of precise and even humble details, which would not have been important enough

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to describe were they not actually existent. It is probable that Tacitus was for four years governor of Gallia Belgica (A.D. 89-93).<sup>1</sup> Something he must have known from personal experience; much else he must have learned from soldiers and merchants who showed the Barbarians the valour and the wealth of Rome. Whatever may have been the ulterior objects, or the ultimate object, of Tacitus in describing the manners of the German tribes to his fellow-countrymen, it is soon evident that his primary purpose is to present a clear and striking picture of peoples and institutions of which he himself has a clear conception. If he is finally a moralist he is immediately an historian, and incidentally, of course, an artist. As the morality which Tacitus may have wished to teach his fellow-countrymen does not concern us; as the artistic workmanship loses its special beauty in a translation; we have the fuller freedom to search for the historical significance of the facts he has recorded for our information. Even Gibbon's account of Germany and its inhabitants is only a feeble copy of that of the Roman historian, the weight and energy of whose narrative are guarantees of its substantial fidelity to the actual lineaments of the life and character of the time.<sup>2</sup>

At the outset our mental vision is carried rapidly over a vast region of territory bristling with forests and reeking with swamps, its skies inclement, its whole aspect savage and gloomy, so repulsive that one can never imagine a stranger making it his home. This terrible land, under the casual industry of its warlike inhabitants, can be made productive of grain, but fruit-trees do not flourish, and although it is good grazing country the cattle are usually stunted. Its

<sup>1</sup> See Gaston Boissier's *Tacite* (Paris: Hachette et Cie., 1903), pp. 36-8. Boissier contends with great probability that Tacitus was *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in Gallia Belgica, although he evidently disregards the well-known passage from Pliny the Elder (*N. H. Lib. VII. Cap. 17*), which the older commentators (Voss, Lipsius, etc.) always read as referring to our Cornelius Tacitus. ("Cornelii Taciti equitis Romani Belgicae Galliae rationes procurantis.")

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, Vol. I. chap. ix. The account given in the text is mainly based upon Church and Brodribb's well-known translation of the *Germania* (Macmillan & Co., 1868).

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innumerable tribes belong to one race, a universally long-limbed, red-haired, blue-eyed people, whose physical energies are equal to sudden emergencies, but are averse from laborious plodding. Cold and hunger they can endure; but heat and thirst are beyond their limits. Their dress is simple: a cloak fastened with a brooch or with a thorn; and even this light garb they frequently discard in battle for greater freedom of movement. Underclothing is a sign of luxury in men, although it is not uncommon in women. Their diet, too, is usually plain, consisting of wild fruits, fresh game or curdled milk, but in war-time they expect their chiefs to provide them numerous feasts, at which the fare is coarse but generous. The men have a rooted objection to work, leaving all domestic and field duties to their women, and to the old or weak. When there is no fighting afoot they can make shift with hunting, or with drinking beer steadily all through the day and night. They keep sober, however, for the pursuit of gambling, to them a passion which has no restrictions and no limit. Their only public entertainment is given by nude young warriors who execute dangerous dances amidst bare swords and bristling spears. Peace alone they cannot abide; but as much as they hate peace they love sloth, and when peace reigns they spend most of their time in drinking, their indulgence in this vice being fraught with danger to the national freedom.

But their master passion is war. They prefer the spear to the plough at any time. It is as splendid and glorious to fight as it is dull and ignoble to work. Courage in the fight is their highest virtue, as cowardice is the unpardonable sin. They are devoted to their chief, especially if he excels in bravery; they listen to him gladly, especially if he excels in eloquence; but they give him the greater devotion and the greater obedience if he excels in generous wealth, because they take pleasure in gifts, particularly in those which it is proper for a brave leader to give and for a brave follower to receive—horses and armour, and pendants and necklets of iron. Brave and warlike as they are, they believe in the military virtue of noise, raising a tempestuous chaunt as they rush to the fray, thus exalting their own spirits



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and quelling those of the foe. Their offensive arm is the iron-pointed lance, good for either stabbing or throwing; few carry the heavier spear, few wield the sword; the foot-soldier also carries javelins. Their defensive armour is of no account. The horseman has a shield; some few attain a breastplate; fewer still a helmet; mostly they go into battle naked or lightly clad. Such arms as they have are objects of loving pride. To throw the shield away is the crowning infamy, punished by social, political and religious ostracism. As the Roman youth becomes a man by the public assumption of the *toga virilis*, so the German boy is equipped with armour in the presence of the general assembly. As every warrior strives to excel his comrades and to emulate his leader, so the leader must retain his superior rank by superior deeds of valour. If he falls in the fray they must not come back alive. This spirit of valorous emulation is accentuated by the fact that every man fights with his clan of kinsmen, and in the near presence of his female and infant dependents.

The women, indeed, are greatly honoured by all German tribes alike. Prophetesses are revered; in one case the men sink below the level of slaves by serving a queen! Like the men, the women are inured to hardship and imbued with the worship of bravery. There is little to distinguish their dress from that of the men. Sometimes they wear a garment of flax which has no sleeves and leaves the arms and breast quite bare. "In spite of which," says Tacitus, with the subtle over-refinement of an erotic civilization, "the marriage bond is strict." Marriage, indeed, is almost a military alliance. The "dowry," which is the gift of the bridegroom, consists of no trifling trinkets of feminine decoration, but warlike gifts of pride and substance—the ox, the bridled horse, and armour, to show the wife she comes to share in war. There is no secret correspondence, no clandestine appointments, no adultery (here Tacitus seems to be pointing the moral against Rome, speaking with exaggerated emphasis accordingly); the feminine victim of a *faux pas* finds by neither beauty wealth nor youth the consoling refuge of a husband's arms. Mothers suckle their own babes! The children

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of the wealthy enjoy no luxury more than the children of slaves. Out among the cattle, at home on the earthen floor, the children of free and unfree live just alike until approaching manhood separates them and the freeborn youth proves his breeding by his valour. Vigorous youths unite with buxom maids at an age when their vital forces are established, and thus give birth to a robust progeny.

Although they are capable of acting in unison with the clan and with the tribe, the social unit is the family, and that less as a form of society than as a pendant of the individual tribesman. Cities are unknown; the settlement or village is established in isolation, around some spring or grove or plain. Even the houses are not close together. Every man has his separate abode with a clear space of ground about it. Stones and tiles are unknown in building; timber is the universal material of construction. They show no care for beauty or elegance. All is for use and nothing for display. A winter habitation they make by digging cellars roofed with dung; in these they also store their crops for protection against frost and hostile forays. Their hospitality is unbounded, including friends and strangers alike. It is a sin—*nefas*—to refuse the shelter of the house to any mortal. The host gives of his best, and all of it, until the supply fails; then host and guest go elsewhere to meet the like reception. Parting gifts are demanded without embarrassment and given without restraint. Comity is the unfailing characteristic of this hospitable relationship.

It was, of course, not to be expected that Tacitus should give us a full picture of German domestic life in these timber-built tenements. Such hints as we have are interesting. The head of the family and his grown-up sons sleep till after sunrise; then they bathe in warm water; then to breakfast, each at his own separate seat and special table. Then, taking their arms in hand, they go forth to what business is pressing, or to a prolonged bout of beer-drinking. These carousals have the usual concomitants of quarrelling and bloodshed; but they also serve the purpose of discussing subjects of personal or political importance—marriage contracts, the making-up of feuds, the choosing

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of a chief, nay, even the great question of peace or war. Nevertheless, cautions the Roman critic, their intemperance in drinking is a serious danger to their national existence. "Let them but drink all they want," says Tacitus, "and they will perish quicker than by the swords of our legionaries."<sup>1</sup> So far, however, as policy and not personality is concerned, the effects of their insobriety are modified by their practice of deciding when sober what they have discussed when drunk; "a double process," says Tacitus, "which is justified by its results." Drunkenness opens all minds, mouths and hearts; sobriety secures a proper selection from the plans mooted in drink.

We may take it from the foregoing paragraph that the public assemblies, whether tribal or intertribal, were gatherings of *sober* councillors. Hither come the chiefs, surrounded, in peace as well as in war, with a large body of picked youths; here attend the single warriors who have not yet learned the virtue of punctuality, as they come dropping in one after the other for several days after the published time of meeting. When a reasonable number have arrived and the business can start, the priests proclaim silence. Then the Chief, or King, according to his birth or age or eloquence or military distinction, is heard, but not necessarily with acquiescence: his power to command is limited by his influence to persuade, and if his sentiments are unpleasing to the rank and file they reject them with groans; if they find them to their mind they brandish their spears.

The Assembly exercises judicial as well as deliberative functions. Traitors and renegades are hanged on trees; cowards and recreants and those guilty of infamous crimes are pressed under a hurdle into a bog and there suffocated. Minor offences are punishable according to scale—fines of cattle or horses are exacted. Part of the penalty goes to the King or the Community, and part to the victim of the offence.

Not only does the Assembly exercise direct judicial functions, it appoints judges to decide cases in the districts and villages. Each judge has a hundred

<sup>1</sup> *Germania* 23. "Si indulseris ebrietati suggerendo quantum concupiscunt, haud minus facile vitiis quam armis vincentur."



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assessors, who advise him in making his decisions and assist him in enforcing them.

Wills are unknown. The Law of Succession is to children, and, in the absence of children, to brothers, and uncles on both sides. The heirs take up the family feuds, but, as we have seen, these can be settled by the distribution of live stock amongst the kin of the victim. Interest, simple or compound, is unknown.

Tribe follows tribe in rotation upon the land of various districts. When a tribe has taken over its district, the land is distributed among its individual members. Corn is the only produce they care about; there are no orchards, no fenced meadows, no irrigation. They do not plough land two years in succession—why should they? there is plenty to spare. They have only three seasons. The rich glories of fruit-bearing autumn are unknown to them alike in name and in reality.

Their funeral ceremonies are simple; there is no Oriental opulence of robes, spices and sepulchral monuments. All is severe and chaste; the warrior's armour is burnt on his pyre; perchance, too, his horse; silence, sorrow and sadness long outlast the brief weeping and wailing of the funeral day. Women may weep the departed; but men should remember him.

Such, in essential outline, is the picture which Tacitus has given us of the Germans, their habits and their institutions. Can any one doubt that it is fundamentally an honest record of what was believed by the writer to be actual fact, coloured, perhaps, a little by the force of the contrast between the barbarian and the civilized standards of life and conduct; coloured, too, doubtless a little by the ethico-political and satirical purpose of the philosophical historian, but in its substance and in most of its details clearly a faithful record of things honestly reported and intelligently sifted? Whatever may have been the object of Tacitus in writing this book, and whatever impression he produced upon the minds of his Roman contemporaries, there can be no doubt as to the emotional effect which the perusal of its minute and definite, sometimes trivial and commonplace, details has on the mind of a modern reader. This effect may, perhaps, be best described by negatives.

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It is not exhilaration, it is not brilliance, it is not inspired by any feeling of prophetic enthusiasm which can sometimes discern the advent of a mighty group of empires from the small and paltry struggles of insignificant tribes. It is rather that cool and sensible emotion which one may feel after a conversation with a serious and strenuous man who regards facts as facts, and who, therefore, narrates nothing startling, lest it should provoke the attacks of a dissolvent criticism. These minds are invaluable to the historical inquirer who comes after them. In them the subjective element is reduced to a minimum, and they furnish the plain fabric for more imaginative minds to embroider at will. "Why tell these things," one asks, "if they were not so? It is not worth while to invent such plain and simple annals." This emotional effect produced by the *Germania* goes far to establish an intellectual perception of its veracity. If the facts had been coloured to the extent that the great mind of Tacitus can colour facts when he likes, we may be sure that the plain and straightforward account we here possess of the manners of the German tribes of the first century would have been replaced by something as bizarre and portentous as the character of Tiberius, something as dramatic and mysterious as the career of Sejanus. Tacitus, fortunately for us, is here the apostle of "useful information"; he is, for the most part, as cold as a Blue Book and as conscientious as a writer of précis.

Although, therefore, it will be part of our future task to ascertain whether, assuming the Roman's account to be true, the subsequent evolution of character in the Anglo-Saxon descendants of the German tribes can be explained as springing naturally from this origin, and as moulded by the influence of an environment constant in some respects and constantly varying in others, we may, perhaps, venture to assert, even at this early stage, that the world into which we glimpse through the pages of Tacitus shocks us less by what is strange than it attracts us by what is familiar. We are sympathetically inclined to admit that here, at any rate, is one source of our national life and of the traditions that have moulded our national existence; that from this

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kindly source we derive some of the most prominent and effective of our national characteristics. Here we find our regard for law, our care in its administration, our devotion to the claims of hospitality, our respect and love for our women, our reverence for the mysteries of religion, and our obedience to its sacred ministrants. Here, too, are our bravery in battle, never eclipsed through our long record as fighters in causes good, bad and indifferent; here, too, is our clannish exclusiveness, our individual independence, and our deep conviction that an Englishman's house is his castle; here, too, are our inebriety and our passion for gambling. From other sources we have learnt to be patient and plodding in industry, to endure both heat and thirst; have acquired our national cohesion and systematized ardour in all the fields of action and of thought, of speculation and experience, of imagination and reality. Here, at any rate, is the groundwork of much of what we have attained in the long roll of subsequent ages; here is much which we can be proud of as kinsmen, grateful for as children.

To what processes of discipline springing from their physical, mental and moral environment the German tribes owed the qualities which Tacitus assigns to them, we are, unfortunately, not in a position to state, except, perhaps, in the most vague and general terms. The present writer is not an anthropologist, nor even an ethnologist, but, although suspicious of the dogmatism which bases final and far-reaching conclusions upon insufficient evidence, he has followed with grateful interest the labours of the brilliant students, in Britain unfortunately too few, who, during the past half-century, have discovered link after link of the chain which connects Neolithic bones and implements with historic man in Europe, and who have proved, in this case almost beyond the possibility of a doubt, that, as one of the most eminent among them says, "there is no evidence whatever to show that the present inhabitants of Europe are not descended from the people of the Neolithic age," and that "in no part of Europe was there any interruption of continuity between the ages of stone and metal."<sup>1</sup> These scholars have demon-

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Origin of the Aryans*, p. 129.



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strated the European origin of the Aryans in everything approaching an historical sense of that term, and it is with a feeling of something like patriotic pride that one now recalls the sneer of Hehn in 1874 at the labours of Latham: "Then it came to pass that in England, the land of eccentricities, a revolutionary brain conceived the notion of the European origin of the Indo-European peoples."<sup>1</sup>

In harmony, therefore, with the theory now generally accepted by ethnologists and historians, we admit that the Germans of Tacitus, instead of having come from that famous Asiatic motherland, the supposed ancestral home of all the Aryan peoples, had attained the civilization, which he assigns to them, as the long result of processes gradually developing their powers under the inclement skies which had lowered upon them from at least the beginning of the Neolithic period, some 10,000 years ago. The descriptions of the Roman historian make it equally certain to which of the three or four Neolithic groups they belonged. Their blue eyes, fair hair, huge frames, compel their assignation to the Neolithic people of the Row Grave and Kitchen Midden type, now most directly represented by the Swedes, the Frisians and the fair-haired Germans of the North. Although there is considerable confusion among classical writers in the use of the words German (or Teuton) and Celtic; although it is equally true that the superficial resemblance between Celt and German may corroborate the idea that some at least of the German tribes of Tacitus were Celts; yet it is certain from other sources that the Roman writers, especially that clear-eyed critic, Caesar, recognized the physical differences between them. It seems certain that, for the most part, the Germans of Tacitus were Germans in the ethnological sense, belonging to that Neolithic stock now generally known as Scandinavian or Nordic. The Celt and the Iberian, right down from the Neolithic ages, have been engaged in evolving qualities which were destined to play their

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Origin of the Aryans*, p. 23. "Da geschah es dass in England, dem Lande der Sonderbarkeiten, ein originelles Kopf es sich einfallen liess den Ursitz der Indo-germanen nach Europa zu verlegen."

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part in the history of Anglo-Saxonia, when the three groups should meet and mingle their traditions and their civilization on British soil. But in Germany the time was not yet, and with slight and partial exceptions we can accept the statement of Tacitus that "the Germans were the original inhabitants of the country, unalloyed by the admixture of immigrant tribes," a statement long accepted as true, then refuted as absurd, and now again admitted as substantially and probably finally true.<sup>1</sup>

This statement of Tacitus, thus corroborated by modern investigators, is interesting chiefly because it points to the operation of the same environment through many ages upon the people who were the subject of his studies, as they are of ours. The same inclement skies, the same gloomy forests, the same deadly swamps, all the rigours of a North European climate untempered by civilization: these had formed an environment especially provocative of those very qualities which Tacitus ascribes to them in his account. We have already quite clearly defined our attitude in the face of those who maintain that when once these qualities were developed under the inspiration of this environment they commenced, at some unascertainable period in the history of the people, to be handed down by hereditary transmission through the blood and brains of all subsequent generations. Hereditary transmission there may be, nay, undoubtedly is; but it is a heritage that is transmitted by tradition and not by blood. It is impossible not to agree with von Ihering and his school when they explain, with so much justice and lucidity, the processes by which national characteristics are formed and developed under the compelling inspiration of soil and climate and the other environmental conditions dependent on these. The difficulty is to follow them when they all at once repudiate their own quite adequate explanation of the phenomena under consideration, and substitute in its place an explanation which is not only unintelligible, but which would be unnecessary even if it could be understood. That process of traditional accumulation which is sufficient

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, Sect. ii. "Ipsos Germanos indigenas crediderim, minimeque aliarum gentium adventu et hospitibus mistos."

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to form a national character is surely sufficient to continue the same process in the evolution of a national character which may be formed but is not finished. The vivid descriptions of these writers enable us to follow with a dramatic intensity of vision the long roll of events and influences which, occurring and increasing in generation after generation, finally issue in the evolution of a fully-fledged national character. But we cannot follow them when they assert, with von Ihling, that a national character once formed is transmitted unalterable through the operation of physical and mental heredity. We refuse to believe that the same kind of forces which are adequate to produce are not adequate to maintain and develop what they have produced. We refuse to believe that the character of the German tribes as described by Tacitus is henceforward to be transmitted through the blood of all their descendants. We see no reason for denying that the process by which that character was formed and transmitted up to the days of Tacitus, the process of accumulative tradition, also acts to form and transmit that character down from the days of Tacitus. Those who hold that national character is originally the creation of environment do not maintain that the process is instantaneous; they describe it as the long result of generations of accumulated physical toil and intellectual and moral effort, as gradually inspired and evoked by the stimuli of external forces. One generation does its work and hands down the tale of its labours to the next. This in turn, the environment still impelling moulding and inspiring, adds its store to the inheritance it has received, and the joint product of the two generations is handed down to a third, and so on, until, as these writers assert, the final and decisive national character is formed, henceforward to be transmitted by heredity unaffected by the environment.

Now we have already given our reasons for refusing to accept this account of the transmission of national character. We may admit that when once a national character has been created it might be handed down substantially unaltered from one generation to another if there were no change of environment. But such stability is almost inconceivable. Even if we could



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isolate a community *in vacuo*, we could not finally stereotype its environment by so doing. Every individual member of a community is a portion of the national environment; and Nature is so prolific in individual differences that there is no limit to the possibilities of environmental change even in a hypothetically isolated community. But that case is only hypothetically interesting. In the instance we are dealing with, the case of the Teutonic tribes of Tacitus, we have an almost continuous record of changing environment from the days of Tacitus to our own; and it is in the results of that changing environment that we are to look for modifications of the national character recorded in the pages of the Roman historian. It is because we believe that the formation of national character is a continuous process, in which the tradition of one generation is handed down to the next, there to undergo modification and addition due to differences of the prevailing environment, and to be again handed down thus modified to a subsequent generation, and so on, *ad infinitum*—it is because we believe this that we have been anxious to start from a well-established tradition of Teutonic national character as a basis for its subsequent developments. If our theory be true, we shall find that, as the history of these tribes is traced, they will be found to exhibit similarities of character in periods separated from each other by centuries. But we shall also expect to find differences. The similarities will not be due to the transmission of qualities by heredity, but to their transmission by tradition and training. Each new generation of the group, together with any strangers who have settled in their midst (and these, perhaps, as often, of entirely different races), is educated in the tradition of its predecessor, and quite naturally and inevitably hands it down to younger successors. If chastity, fidelity, reverence for law and religion, a passion for gambling, a tendency to inebriety, form part of the traditional atmosphere, they are handed down from generation to generation by the strong force of juvenile imitation, aided by conscious training on the part of the elder generation. But to what are the differences due? How explain the new elements in the national character? Simply by the new factors

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operating upon the people under a changed environment. In the case of the tribes of Tacitus, or, at any rate, in the case of those whom we shall follow to the English shore, we shall find differences of character developing under the operation of the factors of their new environment; an environment which has been affected by change of geographical position, with all which that means in the way of streams of influence, not only physical, but also social and political, owing to contact with new social and political groups. These in turn become part of the character of the people, are imbibed in early youth, and are thus handed down from generation to generation, not by heredity, but by tradition, education, training.

It must, of course, be remembered that environment is not simply the forces operating directly upon a people in its habitat. It is the whole of the influences operating upon it from whatever source. Every foreign invasion of England, whether military, commercial, literary or artistic, every enlargement of its horizon by increased facilities of international communication, has changed the English environment, and has thus added to the forces operating to produce character. These forces being, in the aggregate, different from those which, we have seen, operated upon the German tribes of Tacitus, who continued living in Germany, have naturally and inevitably produced a different result, so that not only are the modern Englishman and German different from the Frisian or Chattian (*i. e.* Hessian) of Tacitus, but they are different from each other. From this point of view, the thing requiring explanation would be to find them the same. Indeed, if one may say so, the main difficulty of thoughtful people is not in recognizing the differences of national characters, but in finding a reasonable explanation for their existence and a legitimate ground for maintaining them. The writer, again, ventures to believe that the principle of organic community of interest, handed down, expanded, modified by progressive changes of environment, furnishes both a reasonable explanation of their existence and a legitimate ground for maintaining them. Patriotism is not only explicable as a national sentiment, but justifiable as a reasonable faith.

## CHAPTER VIII

The Anglo-Saxon Poem of *Beowulf*—The German Tribes between the Second and Sixth Centuries—*Beowulf* a Picture of some of the German Tribes about the end of that Period—Origin and History of the *Beowulf* Saga—An Account of its Story—Summary of the Characteristics it exhibits in its People—Similarities and Differences between them and their Representatives in Tacitus—National Character and a national Ideal—*Beowulf* essentially English—The Welding of English Nationality.

It would be satisfying alike to patriotic interest and historical curiosity if we had a complete record of the development of the German peoples from the point where Tacitus leaves them to the time of their appearance on the stage of modern history when, as Franks, Suabians, Thuringians, Bavarians, Saxons, Hessians, Goths, Burgundians, Jutes, Angles and Frisians, they began to play a part in the spread of civilization as they had hitherto played a part in attempting to destroy it. But nothing is more irritating than the *lacuna* which separates the "Germania" of Tacitus from the "Deutschland" of Clovis. The painstaking historian of modern days can piece together little but "*minutiae* of the internal changes of position and relation of the tribes of interior Germany," *minutiae* with which "it would be impossible to load the memory."<sup>1</sup> In Tacitus himself we have already hints of intertribal animosities and the fresh agglomerations which followed the translation of these animosities into military destructiveness. There is reason to suppose that for centuries before the date of the earliest extant specimens of German poetry—the *Merseberg Incantations* and the *Lay of Hildebrand*—there was a constant stream of those *carmina antiqua*, those ancient heroic Sagas, which Tacitus tells us formed their only method of recording

<sup>1</sup> *Germany in the Early Middle Ages, 476-1250*, by Wm. Stubbs, D.D., edited by Arthur Hassall, M.A. (Longmans, 1908), p. 9.



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historical events and traditional beliefs.<sup>1</sup> But nothing is left to guide the imagination in wandering about the vast field which was once filled with these records of religious and patriotic enthusiasm. It is particularly to be regretted that so little can be done to connect the German tribes of Tacitus with the German peoples at the beginnings of modern history. We are able with some measure of certitude to identify the Alemanni as *personæ* of modern European history with the Suevi of Tacitus, the Bavarians with his Marcomanni, the Attoarii or Hetware with his Chatti (and the Chattuarii of Strabo), and the Hugas of *Beowulf* with his Chauci, while the Angles and Saxons are closely connected with his Frisii. But even in these cases the approach to perfect identification is limited by the comminglings of various tribes who disappear to reappear under different agglomerative descriptions. Still, however, the general identification which we are entitled to make between the German tribes of Tacitus and the people of Carolingian Deutschland is not without its historical usefulness, especially for students of the Anglo-Saxon character, inasmuch as the tribes who commenced to raid and then to invade Britain in the fourth century escaped that Romanizing discipline which has made the modern Germans as different from the Germans of Tacitus as the former are different from modern Englishmen. It must be left to others to trace the processes by which the ancient German has become the modern German, while we follow the German tribes who came to our shores, and attempt to trace, at any rate in part, the course of that evolutionary process which produced the modern Briton.

And here, right at the outset, we have the help of the wonderful Saga of *Beowulf*, the earliest poem in English, which deals with historical events separated by only four centuries from the age of Tacitus, and which was copied into the only extant manuscript by two scribes in A.D. 1000. The facts connected with the manuscript are thus briefly summarized by Mr.

<sup>1</sup> "Carminibus antiquis, quod unum apud illos memoriae et annalium genus est," *Germania*, Sect. ii. See also *A History of German Literature*, by Calvin Thomas, LL.D. (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1909), p. 6.

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Wentworth Huyshe in the "Introduction" to his valuable prose translation of the Saga, first issued in 1905: "It is the work of two copyists copying from an older manuscript in some tenth-century monastery of England; bought by Sir Robert Cotton in the seventeenth century (before 1631) at a time when the contents of monastic libraries which had not already been destroyed were scattered about over the land; brought to light by Wanley in his Catalogue in 1705; injured by fire in 1731; copied by Thorkelin, the Icelandic scholar, in 1786; first printed by Thorkelin in 1815, one hundred and ten years after its existence had been made known by Wanley. Incredible as it may seem, during the whole of those years there was no scholar found in all England who apparently ever took the trouble to read, much less edit, the poem."<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately it is not our duty to enter into the controversies which have raged around the question of the composition of this, the earliest English epic, in a manner curiously suggestive of the controversies raging round the question of the composition of the earliest Greek epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Before examining the poem with the same object as we have examined the *Germania* of Tacitus, it is essential only that we should be able to ascertain the probable approximate date of its authorship, and of the period which it describes. After a careful examination of all the evidence and the arguments based upon it, we can gratefully accept the conclusions of Mr. Stopford Brooke and Dr. Clark Hall as sufficient for our own purpose. Mr. Brooke writes: "The main point, however, seems clear. *Beowulf* was built up out of many legends, which in time coalesced into something of a whole, or were, as I think, composed together into a poem by one poet. The legends were sung in the old England (Anglen, now Schleswig-Holstein,) across the seas, and

<sup>1</sup> *Beowulf: An Old English Epic (the Earliest Epic of the Germanic Race)*, translated into modern English prose by Wentworth Huyshe (Routledge, 1908), Intro., p. xx. The writer has used Mr. Huyshe's translation for his text. Where the original is referred to the edition used is that of Messrs. Harrison and Sharp (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1904).

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brought to our England by the Angles, or by that band of Jutes or Saxons whom many suppose to have settled at an early time in northern Northumbria. They were then sung in Northumbria, added to by Northumbrian singers, and afterwards, when Christianity was still young (still young, that is, in England), compressed and made into a poem by a Christian singer,"<sup>1</sup> who, it may be added, was probably a convert, and who was sufficiently in harmony with the spirit of his time and nation to make no careful separation between what he had recently believed as a Pagan and what he now believed as a Christian. And Dr. Clark Hall concludes: "So I picture to myself a Mercian courtier, perhaps a Scôp (minstrel), whose early life may have been spent under the heathen Penda, who changed his religion with the court without being able to get, or perhaps even wishing to get, definite instruction in the new faith, and who perhaps came in some degree under Northumbrian literary influences, writing the earlier part of the poem pretty much as we now have it about A.D. 660, and the latter some twenty years or so after that."<sup>2</sup> Before proceeding to our analysis of the poem, as following upon an analysis of the *Germania*, we may encourage ourselves by adding a sentence from Mr. James A. Harrison, Professor of English at the Washington and Lee University, himself an editor and critic of *Beowulf*: "The epic of *Beowulf* is a sort of poetic *Germania*, an unconscious poetic treatise on the customs and habits of the Early Germans, at once confirmatory of, and supplementary to, Tacitus";<sup>3</sup> but we must bear in vivid remembrance that, in this case, the "treatise" is written in English, and that its author is an Englishman. With its value as a poem rather than as a "treatise" we have little claim to deal at present, seeing that its immediate usefulness must be limited to the degree in which it casts light upon the character and qualities of the Early English people. The argument of the poem is as follows.

The hero is a Goth, and Goths, Danes and Swedes

<sup>1</sup> Stopford Brooke, *History of Early English Literature*, quoted by Mr. Huyshe.

<sup>2</sup> Huyshe, Intro., p. xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Intro., p. xlv.



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are the chief *personæ* of the poem—Teutonic peoples all, near kinsmen of the Englishman who recounts their deeds, and who sympathetically delineates their manners and customs because they are his own, or were those of the Pagan folk from whom he has sprung. The poem opens with an artlessly vivid account of the glory of the Danes, or Scyldings, under various kings until King Hrothgar came, and won "success in war, honour in battle and the glad obedience of his kinsmen-friends." All went well with him until it entered his mind to build a Drinking Hall "greater than children of men had ever heard of." "Lofty and horn-gabled" it rose, and in it the King dealt out rings and other treasures at the banquet. Daily it resounded with harp and song and merriment, and at night, after the beer-drinking, the athelings slept in happiness and peace. All this was hateful to Grendel, a Demon of the Fenland, a Fiend of Hell, who, fierce and furious, seized thirty thanes and slew them in the Hall, this beautiful Hall called the "Hart." Next night he came again to work fresh bale, until at last "he was safest who kept furthest from the Hall of the Hart."—"Thus Grendel ruled and wrought against right, one against all, until the best of houses stood idle." For twelve winter-tides the terrible lone-ganger worked this woe on Hrothgar and his warriors, until sad songs made known the hateful war to children of men in other lands. Thus King Hygelac's Goths heard of the misdeeds of Grendel; among them the noble and powerful thane, Beowulf, who "bade make ready for him a wood wave-crossing ship," then sped over the "Swan's road" with some fifteen chosen comrades, the keenest he could find of them, and arrived at the land of the Danes, the country of Hrothgar (which lay over the waters to the South).

Leaving their broad-bosomed ship fast at anchor, they march to the Hall of the Hart.

"Stone-paved was the street which led their steps.  
Then shone the shirts of war. The shimmering rings,  
Close-linked by hand, hummed in the battle-gear,  
When first they hall-wards fared, arrayed for war;  
Set they then down, sea-weary, the wide shields,  
The hard-wrought bucklers, by the palace wall;

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Then sank they to the seats, the corselets sang  
With sounding metal, and the spears were piled,  
Ash-wood, with steel grey-pointed: such the arms  
Of the sea-wanderers."<sup>1</sup>

They are warmly welcomed by Hrothgar, who knew Beowulf "when he was yet a lad." Beowulf alludes (none too modestly) to his many exploits, and promises "to grapple the fiend with grip of hand and strive for life, foe against foe, without sword or broad yellow round shield in the fight." Hrothgar dwells sadly on his woe. "Full oft over the ale-cup did the warriors boast, flushed with beer, that with their terrible swords they would abide Grendel's onset in the Beer Hall. Then, at morning tide, this Mead Hall, this lordly palace, was stained with gore, all the bench-boards covered with blood when the daylight shone." After Hrothgar's welcome, on they go to the Beer Hall, to drink the bright liquor together, Danes and Goths alike, while a thane bore round the art-adorned ale-cup, and from time to time a minstrel sang clear in Hart Hall. There Unferth, a thane of Hrothgar, jealous of Beowulf, chides him as an idle boaster, and foretells an evil fate for him if he dare "await Grendel at close quarters for the space of one night." Beowulf responds with something more than spirit to his "friend Unferth, drunk with beer." He boasts still more loudly of his own brave deeds, taunts Unferth with his cowardice in the matter of Grendel, in which charge he includes the Danes in general: "But now, ere long, I shall show him in battle the courage and strength of the Goths; afterwards, let him, who may, go lighthearted to the mead-drinking when the morning light of another day, the ether-clad sun, shall shine from the South over the children of men."

This "steadfast resolve" of Beowulf causes gladness in the heart and hall of Hrothgar, whose Queen, Waltheow, the "free-born wife," "the gold-adorned, ring-adorned Queen," "noble of mind," "mindful of courtesies," carries round the "costly cup" and bids "be

<sup>1</sup> *Beowulf*, ll. 320-9, translated by Messrs. G. E. and W. H. Hadow in their *Oxford Treasury of English Literature*, Vol. I. p. 9 (Clarendon Press, 1906).

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blithe at the beer-drinking." After more brave words from the "slaughter-fierce warrior, Beowulf," the Danes retire to rest, and leave him and his comrades to their watch, while "shapes of the protecting shadow came stalking, wan beneath the sky, night darkening over all." Doffing his iron coat of mail, his helmet, and his sword, he determines to take no advantage of arms against one who knows not the noble arts of attack and defence; he will have "war without weapons" against the Fiend; and so he lays his head on the "cheek-bolster," with his warrior thanes around him.

"Then from the moor, under the misty slopes, comes Grendel stalking," bursts open the door, and, before the very eyes of Beowulf, seizes a sleeping warrior, "bit his flesh, drank the blood in streams, swallowed with unceasing bites, and soon had devoured all of the dead man, to his feet and hands."

And then to Beowulf and a bloody struggle, in which the Hart Hall shook and would have fallen had it not been "all fast within and without with iron bands, smithied with cunning thought." As it was, "many a mead-bench adorned with gold fell from the sill," until at last Grendel's arm is torn off by the Hero, and God's enemy lay, "screaming a horrible shriek, a triumphless song—the slave of Hell lamenting his wound." "That was clear token of the victory, when the battle-brave Hero laid down the hand, arm and shoulder, Grendel's clutching limb there altogether, under the wide roof." And so to his Fen-refuge, to the Mere of the Water Demons, where Hell seized his heathen soul.

Beowulf's glory is now proclaimed far and wide, although (it is curiously added) the Danes "did not at all blame their friend and lord, the gracious Hrothgar, for that was a good king." "At times athane of the King, a vaunt-laden man, one who remembered a very great number of tales of old time" <sup>1</sup> (the *carmina antiqua* we have heard of), made a new story interwoven with truth." He sings of Sigemund the Dragon-slayer, the Killer of Giants; of Heremod, "whose strength and valour waned," and how Beowulf is "more than these."

<sup>1</sup> *Beowulf*, ll. 868-70, "A very great number of tales of old time," i. e. "eal-fela eald-gesegena worn."



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Then, too, there is the "Thanksgiving" of Hrothgar, who, "stepping forth from the bride-bower with a great company, and his Queen with him, measuring the path to the Mead Hall with her maiden band," praises the eternal Creator first, and, after Him, Beowulf, at whose great deed even Unferth was silent. Then, of course, comes the true English function of the Banquet (which takes place in the restored Hall), the giving of gifts to Beowulf, the golden ensign, the helmet and coat of mail, the mighty treasure-sword. "Never have I heard of many men who in more friendly wise bestowed upon each other at the ale-bench the four precious things adorned with gold"; these, and eight horses with cheek-plates, one with a cunningly-wrought, art-adorned saddle, the war-seat of Hrothgar himself—these for Beowulf; for each of his comrades "a precious object, an heirloom." And so ends the lay of Grendel with the gnomie comment, "Much of loved and loathed must he endure who long here in these days of strife makes use of the world."

But still the rejoicings are not ended. The mead-benches resound with the lay of King Finn, a song of the Rape of a Danish Helen, with the deeds of treachery and revenge that are the burden of all such tales from Homer downwards. Waltheow again takes round the cup, speaks graciously to Beowulf, to whom she also gives rich gifts—"two armlets, a mantle, and rings, with a collar, the goodliest that ever I heard of on earth." There is more drinking and revelry, until sleep falls upon the warriors in their ale-cups. "It was a good people!"

Again "there was a cry in Hart." The Demon-Mother of Grendel, greedy and gloomy, will avenge her son's death. Coming to the Hall she repeats his exploits. Clutching at Æschere, one of the sleeping Danes, she rushes back to the Fen unscathed. Beowulf is fetched in haste, and told of the death of Æschere. He tracks the monster to her mere, over narrow ways and lonely paths, steep cliffs, many homes of sea-monsters, an unknown road, until suddenly he finds the mountain trees overhanging the grey

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rock and the dismal wood. The warriors all sit down. "Then along the water they beheld many of the serpent kind, strange sea-dragons, swimming the deep, sea-monsters also, lying out upon the cliff-slopes, serpents and savage beasts." Beowulf, this time, girds on all his armour, with his sword "Hrunting," the gift of the now-friendly Unferth, and after commending his friends to Hrothgar, bidding him send his treasures to his own King in Gothland, except the famous sword, which he bequeaths to Unferth, he plunged into the whelming water of the Demon's mere, and it was a day's space ere he could see the bottom. Many monsters harassed him in the water; many a sea-beast broke the war-shirt with hostile tusks; the sea-wolf herself gripped him and carried him off until he found that he was "in some kind of enemy hall." "He saw fire-light, a brilliant flame shining brightly"; also he saw the Demon herself, "and the treasure blade sang out a greedy war-song on her head." But "the battle-flasher would not bite"—the first time its power had failed. And so to the old story of hand-grips once more! He falls in the struggle; she draws her knife, and he had perished but for the braided breast-net—but for this and Holy God, who brought him to his feet again. Then saw he an old Jutish sword, good and splendid, the work of the Giants, here among the war-gear of the enemy. This he seized, and then! the blade went all through her doomed body. Bloody was the sword; the hero rejoiced in his work. This vengeance wreaked on Grendel's dam, he spies Grendel's lifeless body, and, in anger and revenge, hews off that Demon's head, and then plunges upward through the waters. Meantime, all his companions have left the mere in despair, except his own countrymen. They sit, sick at heart, and stare at the water. "But soon was he swimming; he dived up through the water, bearing the Demon's head with him." Then went they to meet him; thanked God; and rejoiced to see their chieftain again unhurt. And so back to the Hall, and with them, high-souled among the company, their liege-lord trod the mead-plains. Hrothgar welcomes him in a speech which is wonderful in this connexion, a speech

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which is nothing more or less than an ancient Greek's view of Nemesis touched with Christian colouring. A man attains success; "he knows no worse state until some measure of pride waxes and grows within him, when the guardian, the shepherd of the soul, sleeps. Too sound is that sleep, bound up with sorrows; very near is the slayer, who from arrow-bow shoots spitefully." Then comes an awful change: Wyrd, Fate, Doom, is upon him. The frail body wastes away, and one succeeds who dispenses treasure without grieving. "Guard thee against this baleful envy, beloved Beowulf, thou best of men, and choose thee that better thing, eternal gain."—"Incline not to pride, great warrior. Now for a while is the fulness of thy might; soon after, it shall be that sickness or sword shall deprive thee of power, or the clutch of fire, or welling of flood, or grip of blade, or flight of spear, or dire old age; the brightness of eyes passes away and grows dark; straightway it shall be that death o'er-masters thee, thou lord of men."—"Go now to thy seat; share in the feast-joy, thou honoured in war. There shall be many treasures in common for us when morning comes." And so, while "the helm of night loomed dark over the clansmen," to feasting once again they go, until at last "the great-hearted one rested; spacious and gold-adorned the Hall towered aloft; the guest slept within, until the black raven, blithe-hearted, announced the joy of heaven," the Dawn.

If the *Lay of Beowulf* can be divided into parts, we have now come to Part III., to wit, Beowulf's return to Gothland. To Unferth first he gives back the sword "Hrunting," with thanks to him for the lending. Then, with more thanks to Hrothgar, and promises of even greater help if need shall be, he extends an invitation to Hrethric, Hrothgar's son, to come to Gothland, where he shall find many friends, since "far countries are the better sought out by him who is himself of good worth." Hrothgar replies by declaring peace between the peoples of the Goths and the Spear-Danes: "Treasures in common shall there be while I rule the wide realm; many a man shall greet another with good



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things across the gannet's-bath; over the sea shall the ringed ship bring presents and love-tokens." With more gifts, with tears, with kisses, he bade farewell to the beloved Hero, while the sea-goer, which rode at anchor, awaited her lord and master. The sea-timber thundered, the wave-floater put forth foamy-necked over the sea streams with wreathed prow, until they could make out the cliffs of the Goths, the well-known headlands. Welcomed by King Hygelac and Queen Hygd, to them, in response to their asking, he re-tells the tale of his exploits, with additional details and no unnecessary modesty in the telling. To King and Queen alike he gives a royal share of the royal gifts. As for Hygd, "ever after that treasure-giving was her breast worthily adorned." And now there are more gifts for Beowulf, "a famous heirloom of a sword, and seven thousand pieces of gold, a house and ruler's seat." And here we learn that Beowulf had not always been so famous for courage. "Long was he condemned while the sons of the Goths had not accounted him of worth, nor would the lord of the war-hosts do him much honour on the mead-bench; they strongly suspected that he was slack, an unpromising atheling." But now "a reversal of every slight came to the glory-blessed man!"

At last, when Hygelac and Heardred had fallen in battle with the Swedes, "it was then that the wide realm came into the hand of Beowulf." For fifty winters he ruled, until the Dragon came, "a certain One who began to hold sway on dark nights, keeping watch over a hoard in a high burial mound, a steep stone hill. Beneath it was a path unknown to man."—"There, in that earth house, were many such treasures as some man, I know not who, in days of yore with thoughtful purpose had hidden there, the beloved possessions, the vast legacy of a noble race." For three hundred winters the hoard had been guarded by a Dragon, until some "sin-perplexed soul" had blundered into it and taken away a precious cup what time the Dragon slept. Furious at the theft, the monster ravaged and burned the land of the Goths, nay, gave the house of Beowulf himself to flames. That ancient warrior rouses himself for a last fight, single-handed as of old. With eleven other warriors

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he goes; but there is a thirteenth—he who had been there before, he must show the way. Arrived at the headland where lies the treasure mound, Beowulf again recounts his warlike deeds, and then “uttered for the last time words of vaunting promise”: “I ventured on many battles in my youth; once more will I, the aged guardian of my people, go into the fight and do gloriously if the fell-destroyer will come forth to me out of his earth chamber.”—“Await ye on the mound, clad in your mail-coats, ye men in your battle-gear, which of us two can best survive wounds after the deadly onslaught. It is not your adventure, nor of any man, save mine alone, to measure strength with the monster and do deeds of earlship. I will not flee a foot’s length from the keeper of the mound, but it shall be for us as Wyrd, the allotter of every man, decrees for us.” The fight begins; the Dragon spurts fire; the war-sword of Beowulf fails in the fight; the hero is doomed to death. “No pleasant journey was it that the great son of Ecgtheow (Beowulf) should have to leave the earth, against his will inhabit a dwelling elsewhere; but so must every man give up allotted days.”<sup>1</sup> Again they closed, while his comrades fled. But one young warrior, Wiglaf, reproaches the others for benefits forgot, and, grasping his sword, rushes into the fight. “Now, O Atheling of the single heart, famous for deeds, must thou defend thy life with all thy might! I will help thee!” But Wiglaf’s shield was burned up to the boss by the fire-waves; Beowulf’s brand “Nægling” snapped asunder, and it was Wiglaf’s sword that plunged into the Dragon’s body. Beowulf’s knife, the slaying-knife, keen and battle-sharp, was ready in his hand, and “cut through the Dragon to the middle”; and so the enemy is slain. But Beowulf also has received his death wound; he knows his end is nigh. He briefly reviews his life, not without a touch of his wonted pride: “Fifty winters have I ruled this people. No people’s king of those dwelling around, not any of them, durst meet me with his war-friends, oppress me with terror. In my home I abided time’s

<sup>1</sup> “*Alætan læn dagas*” = “Surrender the days lent to him.” *Beowulf*, l. 2592.

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shaping, held my own well, sought no treacherous quarrels nor swore many oaths unrightly. In all this, sick as I am with mortal wounds, I may have comfort, because the Ruler of Men cannot upbraid me with the murder of kinsmen, when my life parts from my body."—"Quick, beloved Wiglaf; bring forth the treasure, that I may see the ancient wealth, the golden possessions, may well survey the bright, curious gems; that because of the treasure-wealth I may more calmly leave my life and lordship which I have long held." All this is done; the Hero gives orders for a funeral mound to be erected for him: "it shall tower high on Whale's Ness, as a memorial for my people, so that seafarers who drive tall ships from afar over the mists of ocean may call it in after-time 'Beowulf's Mound.'"—"Thou, O Wiglaf, art the last remnant of our race of the Wæg-mundings. Fate has swept away all my kinsmen, earls in valour, to the appointed doom. I must after them." That was the old King's last word from the thoughts of his breast ere he sought the funeral pile, the hot, destroying flames. His soul departed from his bosom to seek the doom of the righteous. This, I have heard, is the fate of all those, whoever they be, who disturb with hands a treasure chamber, if they find the waking guardian dwelling in the mound."

Wiglaf nobly, if bitterly, tells the ten cowards what he thinks of them, and lets them know *their* doom. "Every man of your Kin-burgh will have to wander, deprived of land-rights, as soon as the Athelings shall hear from afar of your flight, your inglorious deed! Better is death for every one of noble birth than a life of shame!"

A messenger bears the sad news to the camp on the cliff, and forebodes woe to his people as the result of Beowulf's death. With great honour the Hero's body is committed to the flames: "the wood-reek mounted up black above the burning pile; the roaring flame mingled with the sound of weeping when the tumult of the wind had ceased." For ten days they built the War-Hero's beacon. The remains of the burning they surrounded with a wall such as skilled men could most worthily devise. In the mound they placed rings and jewels;



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all such adornments as the war-minded men had before taken from the hoard. They left the treasure of earls to the earth to hold—the gold in the ground where now it yet remains, as useless to men as it was before!

“Then around the funeral mound rode twelve battle-brave Athelings, sons of earls. They would lament their loss, mourn their King, utter the word-lay and speak of the Hero. They praised his nobleness, and greatly extolled his heroic deed. So is it meet that man should praise his friend and lord with words, love him in heart, when he must fare forth from the fleeting body. Thus did the people of the Goths, companions of his hearth, mourn the fall of their lord; said that he was a world-king, mildest of men and kindest, to his people most gracious, and of praise most desirous.”<sup>1</sup>

“These honours Ilium to her hero paid,  
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's Shade.”

Such, in very inadequate outline, is the picture given by the first English epic of the character and conduct of the folk whose deeds it has immortalized. It is not necessary, even if it were possible, to claim it as representing merely the life and manners of those tribes who founded the Anglo-Saxon realm of England; although, even on that supposition, as we have already shown, the claim could be made on behalf of a greater number of Teutonic tribes than is often supposed. We can accept with content the conclusions of scholarship that the *Beowulf* Saga depicted actions and represented ideas which were the common property of the whole Teutonic family of peoples. And can any one doubt that in *Beowulf* we find substantially the same characteristics in the Teutonic tribes as we have already found them possessing in the *Germania* of Tacitus?

Both authors alike, the detached foreign critic and the patriotic poet, describe the brave and splendid passion for war-like adventure; the hate and disgust

<sup>1</sup> “Lof-geornost,” a beautiful phrase, and a beautiful end to the poem—

“ . . . he wære woruld-cýning  
Mannum mildust and monþwærust,  
Leóðum lípost and lof-geornost.”

(ll. 3182-4.)

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at cowardice; the honour paid to woman; the whole-hearted disposition for hospitality; the devotion to king and chief, whom it is eternal ignominy to desert in danger; the pleasure taken in gifts, both for their material value and their social significance; the shame of adultery; the too-great love of inebriety; the taste for minstrelsy and ancient epic song; the personal independence; the pride in one's own achievements. There are differences, of course, differences such as those which might mark a counsel's and a judge's description of the same person. Tacitus could not possibly tell us all the virtues, perhaps not all the faults, since his knowledge was limited and his bias was Roman. The English poet would not tell us all the faults, because his bias was patriotic; perhaps not all the virtues, because the scheme of his poem did not call for their mention. But the elements of character are substantially the same. During four centuries of inter-tribal movement there had been a gradual approach to a firmer and more elaborate civilization. The whole entourage of the *Beowulf* peoples is more dignified in its external aspects than that of the tribes of Germania; there is richer adornment in the mansion, more elaboration in the dress, more pomp and complexity in the armour. And the people of *Beowulf* have the sea, the sea whose multitudinous aspects are expressed in so many phrases of direct simplicity; the ships, its tender epithets for which are one of the marvels of the poem. What the sea means as a moulder of character none know better than the English. The courage that faces its dangers, that dares its storms and does not fear its depths, is a totally different virtue to any courage shown by the inland dweller. This courage the folk of the *Beowulf* possess; it blows through the atmosphere of the poem like an east wind; it is courage without the thirst for blood that marks the courage of the tribes of Tacitus.

But the chief value of the English poem is that it shows the people in possession of a national ideal, an ideal marked by dignity and nobility in spite of blots, the dignity and nobility being personal and permanent, the blots being those of the time. It would be easy

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to construct from Tacitus the elements of such an ideal as that afterwards perfected in Beowulf; but any ideal that may have existed could have had little national significance owing to the state of mutual war in which the various tribes endured. It was only when a common environment with common dangers and experiences produced common sentiments in a particular conglomeration of tribes that a common ideal could be created, and as "without a vision the people perisheth" it was only with the formation of a common ideal that national life became possible. We have every reason for the belief that the character of Beowulf as handed down in the Saga from generation to generation was the common possession of all the tribes who shared in the invasion of England; and the shape which that character took in the poem as written in England marks, more than all the detailed events of Anglo-Saxon history, the state at which the consciousness of national unity had then arrived. It is thus highly important to obtain a clear idea of the character of Beowulf as exhibited in the poem, and we shall, therefore, not apologize for reconstructing it as fairly as possible from the indications given in the Saga.

Beowulf is not a gentleman in the Victorian sense of the term; not in the Elizabethan; nor is he the "verray parfit gentil knight" of Chaucer. *Sans peur* he may be, but *sans reproche* he is not, and perhaps an ideal is not less helpful to conduct for having some portion of human weakness to bring it nearer to our imitation. Beowulf is very boastful, as boastful as an Homeric hero; but his boasts are either records of actual deeds or faithful promises of future performances. He can be very angry; but such men as Unferth were made to be angry with, until they repent, when anger is lost in forgiveness. He has not broken *many* oaths; but who of Beowulf's later kin can put his hand upon his heart and swear that he has been always true? Besides, is it certain that in the land and among the people where the Saga first took shape these blemishes were blemishes at all? The Christian English poet sprinkles the Pagan tale with Holy Water, and, as in many a Christian legend, its miraculous power exposes as evil what



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had hitherto seemed fair and pure. But the Christian church shows many traces of having once been a Pagan temple; and much remains unchanged in its original beauty and goodness. Beowulf has all the bravery of his people; but his bravery is not mere bareserk love of slaughter. He rides about redressing human wrongs, and his courage and self-sacrifice are most conspicuous when the enemy is most terrible and supernatural. He accepts the becoming rewards with grace and dignity; they are the legitimate guerdon of his valour and skill, the ancient counterpart to the wealth and honours which his modern kinsmen to this very day bestow upon their successful leaders. It would be churlish to refuse, no less for the sake of the givers than for the sake of those among whom the bounty will in turn be generously distributed. But the great note in the man is his naked loneliness of soul. Possessing in himself his own desire, he grapples with his enemies *alone*, at times with no resources but his own unconquerable spirit. And with all this essential greatness he possesses what greatness so often neglects—the minor graces and charities which give social life its charm and beauty. Courteous and urbane; grateful and generous; nobly ambitious, but capable of self-abnegation; loving his kindred, and quickly ready to forgive a passing fault: here is a character which, if it does not attain to all the Aristotelian virtues, all the Christian graces, all the chivalrous accomplishments of the Spenserian or Tennysonian heroes, is yet clearly akin to them in the essential features of their character. Can we wonder that the Anglo-Saxon people, bringing this with them as a universal ideal, were able to forget their tribal differences, and, aided of course by the special environment of their new home, develop that national consciousness which fitted them for the great destiny which is yet in process of a accomplishment?

## CHAPTER IX

The Growth of Anglo-Saxon Nationality : (1) Political Development; (2) Social Development—*Political* : Gradual Union of small war Bands under more powerful Princes; Growth of separate Kingdoms: Northumbria; Mercia; Wessex—The Danish Invasion—The Policy of Alfred—His Army; his Fleet; his Aristocracy; his nationalizing Policy towards the Danes—Political Union at the Date of the Norman Conquest—*Social* : The Village Community; its Commingling of different racial Elements; the Influences affecting its Development—The Growth of national and of local Patriotism—The Influence of the Church; of foreign Travel; of Commerce and the Life of Towns—The Norman Conquest: the Beginning of a new Process of Change and Amalgamation.

IN the two preceding chapters we have endeavoured to illustrate the view which regards the character of a community in one generation as the basis of a tradition which reappears in a later generation with similarities due to the continuity of the communal life, and differences due to the variations of environmental experience which have modified and developed it. That some of the specific and characteristic qualities of the Germans of Tacitus reappear in the people of the epic of *Beowulf* is undeniable; that there are differences is equally undeniable. That the identities are due to continuity of tradition, and the differences due to variations of environment, are conclusions which must be accepted by those who admit the weight of the criticisms previously directed upon the alternative explanation of hereditary racial qualities. It is easy to understand how a popular vice, such as drunkenness, or, let us say, the tendency to inebriety, passes from one generation to another in the same community owing to the force of example and the direct teaching which inculcates it as a praiseworthy accomplishment. It is a notorious fact that this particular tendency has been a conspicuous feature in our continuous national development from the *Germania* down to the *Flying Inn*. The

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family atmosphere and the popular tradition alike have encouraged it until quite late in our history, when attempts have been made, with considerable though incomplete success, to modify both the home influence and the social atmosphere in the direction of discouraging the tendency by changing the environment in which it has been matured. Even those who contend that drunkenness is a racial vice must admit that it can be eradicated by modifying the environment; and to admit this is to deny the value of race as a practical factor in social development. There were other qualities, both vices and virtues, which, as we have seen, marked our ancestors of the days of Tacitus and of the days of Beowulf alike; some of them, both vices and virtues, have been continuous elements in our character as a people; but the people of *Beowulf* possessed some characteristics not exhibited by their predecessors, and we, their successors through many generations, have continually exhibited new characteristics, while maintaining a continuous tradition in regard to some of the old characteristics. It is to the constant intermingling of the newer environments with the older traditions that the varying development of national character is due; and, as we have already suggested, the development of nationality is itself dependent upon the operation of the same principle—the formation of a common tradition, and its continuous modification by the operation of a common change of environment.

Any attempt to describe the process by which the intermingling of various tribes and traditions contributed to the formation and consolidation of nationality in Anglo-Saxon times must, of course, take into account the fact that we still need, and probably shall never get, that full documentary illumination without whose aid absolute precision of statement is impossible. The Anglo-Saxons produced no Herodotus or Livy, possibly because events were not sufficiently inspiring to evoke the highest energies of historical genius; possibly because the finest intelligences were too much enthralled by active participation in events to spare time and effort to write books about them. The endeavour, at any rate, to see things and persons as they actually



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were is too often faced by a cloud of almost palpable darkness, into which we ardently peer in the hope of making out the definite shape of some looming vagueness which should mean something, if only we could see it steadily and see it whole. Even the very latest historian of the period admits, in perhaps too pessimistic a mood, that what he tells us is guesswork, though it is the guesswork of historical experts and specialists "who have pieced together every bit of information," and though it agrees with what is actually known of the real events and people of the time.<sup>1</sup>

We need not be surprised, therefore, if this paucity of definite material leaves room for wide differences of opinion as to the national value of what the Anglo-Saxons accomplished. Even in cases where the historical canvas presents a series of naturally co-ordinated events and a group of well-known personages, the historical critic too often finds means to impose his own personality upon them to such an extent as to confuse the plainest issues and to distort the clearest facts; and in the present case we can distinctly see two currents of subjective predilection causing two fundamentally opposite views of the nature and value of the Anglo-Saxon contribution to our national progress. On the one hand, we have those historians who are so dominated by a sense of the high state of civilization introduced into Britain by the Romans that they can feel nothing but regret that it was crushed and obliterated by a mob of brutal barbarians with their "quarrels of kites and crows." On the other, there is that *furor Teutonicus* which bases everything that is great and precious in our social and political institutions upon the foundations laid by the German invaders, and eliminates both Roman and Celt as influences contributing to our national culture and tradition.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The People of England," by Sir Stanley Leathes, K.C.B., M.A. (*The People in the Making*. Wm. Heinemann, 1915).

<sup>2</sup> Maitland, who is in general an advocate of *Teutonism*, admits the survival of both Roman and Celtic elements in the Anglo-Saxon arrangements for land tenure and cultivation. *Domesday Book and Beyond*, by Frederic William Maitland, LL.D. (Cambridge University Press, 1907), pp. 221-2. See also p. 351: "There can be little doubt that in Britain numerous villages were formed which reproduced in

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If, however, we hold our minds free from these temperamental prepossessions of the subjective historian, we cannot but see that the growth of civilization is almost universally an amalgamating process by which the traditions of different communities are intermingled to form a newer social organism; and that, whatever may have been the precise part played by each of the combining traditions, it is impossible to suppose that any two peoples ever commingled without some elements of the separate traditions entering into the later combination. Our Anglo-Saxon history, even as described by those who regret it most as a destructive and not a consolidating agency, itself gives emphatic support to this statement of the general law of social evolution. Thus Sir Stanley Leathes, who says that with the Anglo-Saxon invasions "we have now come to a time when the higher and better was destroyed by the lower—the Roman way of life by the Anglo-Saxon"—and holds that "all that this country gained thereby was a certain brutal spirit of freedom,"<sup>1</sup> is able to crowd his too-abbreviated pages with interesting details which show as clearly as possible that the Anglo-Saxons, too, were but runners in the great Lucretian torch race of tradition, and that even their flickering light was not altogether their own, but was strengthened by beams borrowed from many primeval and coeval flames. In his pages we catch glimpses of tribes and companies under separate leaders growing into composite kingdoms; the invading Saxons marrying captive British women, cultivating their land by the ancient open-field method, and learning the use of agricultural tools from the Romanized Britains; the free men of the "hundred" building up their laws, customs and tenure of property, and making arrangements for the protection of British and Welsh. The social institution of the hundred is gradually merged into the wider corporation of the county; the

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all essentials the villages which Saxons and Angles had left behind them on the mainland, and as little doubt that, very often, in the west and south-west of Britain, German kings and earls took to themselves integral estates, the boundaries and agrarian arrangement whereof had been drawn by Romans, or rather by Celts."

<sup>1</sup> Leathes, *The People in the Making*, Chap. III.

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local kings impose peace and union among their quarrelsome people, and substitute the family feud by the were-gild. They take the Romanized towns and the people in them under their protection, and profit by their long-established trade and industry, founding markets there and special courts of justice. We witness the growth of the thanehood, the warrior-servants of the King; the gradual conversion of the kings and their people to Christianity, with all that this great event brought of foreign culture into the native atmosphere; the Church introducing writing and other civilizing arts and practices; the transformation of folk-land into book-land; the management of estates by foreign monks; the gradual appropriation of a fourth of the land to the Church, its bishops and its abbots; the rise of a landed aristocracy, lay and ecclesiastical. We learn of the growth of composite kingdoms like Northumbria, East Anglia and Mercia; then of their disappearance into larger agglomerations; of the imposition of the Danegeld to provide means for the defence of the Anglo-Saxon land against the Danish invader; of the transformation of this special impost into a general tax; of the direct influence of foreign manners in civilizing the natives; of the monks working hard themselves and teaching industry to others, introducing new methods of agriculture, draining the marshes and reclaiming the waste, bringing in glass from the Continent, writing beautiful manuscripts, teaching singing and the use of musical instruments. Then we are told of the effect of the Danish invasion on English law and social life, and of a thousand other details bearing witness to a vast intermingling of variegated traditions to form the new English people. We have coins copied from those minted in Byzantium; we catch a glimpse of London with its traders, Frenchmen from the Channel coast, men of the Low Countries and Germans from Cologne. And the final words of this vigorous, picturesque and crowded chapter give us all we need as a tribute to that principle of social growth whose operation is no less evident in England before the Conquest than at any other place and period of recorded history: "The Anglo-Saxon period began with destruction. It ended by giving us our English people, in which Angles



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and Saxons and Danes were merged with Britons. It gave us one king and one kingdom, divided into hundreds and counties. It gave us one Church; and the Church gave us religion, reading and writing, and written law. . . . But it needed the Norman rule to bring out by discipline the worth that was in the people."<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere we have the statement that "for the most part our knowledge and our customs come to us from our ancestors, who acquired that knowledge and improved those customs with infinite labour and suffering. Among these ancestors are the Anglo-Saxons";<sup>2</sup> and Sir Stanley Leathes thus happily modifies his statement that all that the Anglo-Saxon gave this country was "a certain brutal spirit of freedom." Fortified by this testimony, the author will have the less hesitation in proceeding in his own way to develop the principle of organic continuity of common interest as illustrated by the evolution of Anglo-Saxon history, with the proviso that, in matters where the facts are uncertain or obscure, he has not presented as his own view any opinion not accepted by the most careful and cautious modern historians of the various schools.

We have already observed how heterogeneous were the racial constituents of the confederations of tribes who, after their occupation of England, became known under the general title of the "Anglo-Saxons." That this racial diversity operated to delay the final consummation of political union cannot be denied, inasmuch as racial diversity is an index of diversity of historical environment. But neither can it be asserted that this racial diversity pointed to the possession of special aptitudes in any one race eternally unfitting it for political and social amalgamation with the other races. Two broad and incontrovertible assertions can be made relative to the historical evolution of Anglo-Saxonia; the one indicating that the political union of the various tribes was eventually accomplished, the other maintaining that this consummation was not effected until after several centuries of internecine and even fratricidal warfare. The one makes it clear that diversity of race did not prevent social union around a sphere of common interests, the other that common kinship, even where it existed, did not

<sup>1</sup> Leathes, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

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bring a common national sentiment until the pressure of a common environment established the recognition of common interests. The real cause of the union of the Anglo-Saxon states can no more be sought in identity of racial endowment than the delay in effecting this union can be assigned to diversity of racial endowment. If there was unity of race it did not, of itself, secure political unity. If there was racial diversity it did not prevail to maintain political disunion. Political disunion was due to the competition between tribes and kingdoms with hostile interests; political union was due to the pressure of circumstances which weakened or destroyed the various conflicting interests in favour of an ever-broadening community of interest.

Whether we turn to politics in the narrower sense; whether we investigate the more interesting spheres of social life and progress; whether we deal with trade or commerce, with the fine or the utilitarian arts, we find everywhere the tendencies of national development in Anglo-Saxonia associated with the tendency to find common spheres of interest and activity for the innumerable sporadic bands who found themselves in agricultural and pastoral possession of Britain when the process of military settlement was over. The history of the Anglo-Saxons in England on the political side is the history of the pressure brought to bear upon these small and scattered communities to form larger agglomerative districts for military and administrative purposes, and the eventual union of these, at various removes, into the kingdom of England. Racial quarrels and family pride had to give way beneath the weight of the common necessity to live in security and comfort, and the institutions which made this possible became the ægis of the common hopes and the radiating centres of common influence. It is the practical recognition of this fact, although in different phrasing, which has enabled Kemble and Green and Oman to give to the wars of the Heptarchy a distinction and an interest which could not attach to them as the mere "quarrels of kites and crows"; and which, in spite of the poverty of the facts and of the imagination of those who first recorded them, has restored to our early history some

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of the dignity and humanity with which Herodotus and Thucydides invested the records of Hellenic wars. Politics, in the common sense of the term, is but the outer shell of the process of social development, having no real significance apart from the living forces which burn and strive beneath it; and those histories are most interesting and fruitful which trace the growth and development of the social tradition as moulding the political institutions which form its outer framework. But if, for the present, we admit the usual distinction, and turn to the specifically political side of Anglo-Saxon history, we find that the operating causes of the final amalgamation were causes leading to that intermingling of hostile, or at any rate differing, environments which gradually forms a common environment. If we run briefly over the causes which operated in this direction, we find early evidence that the tendency of the settled invaders was to found an infinite number of petty kingdoms, whose constant wars with their immediate neighbours resulted in the disappearance of many of them to form henceforth unrecognizable portions of more potent states. Gentile aggregations gave way to territorial combinations; such a combination, more powerful or more warlike than its neighbours, spread its limits by conquest. The innumerable kingdoms which partitioned the conquered land into so many competing spheres of interest at the end of the sixth century themselves underwent the same process of conflict and amalgamation which had produced them; and they in turn had to give way to the ever-active competitive tendency which led to the establishment of still larger territorial aggregations under the authority of fewer and more powerful monarchs. Thus, in the year 588, King Æthelric of Bernicia amalgamated the warring kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira into the kingdom of Northumbria, and twenty years later, "instead of a chaos of isolated peoples, the conquerors were now, in fact, gathered into three great groups,"<sup>1</sup> those of Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex, whose rivalry for the mastery of all the land lasted until the opening of the ninth century, when Ecgbert's conquests of Mercia

<sup>1</sup> Green's *Short History* (under A.D. 588 and 607).



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and Northumbria made it finally possible for Alfred to govern the English people as a national whole, and for Eadred in the middle of the tenth century to become the first king at whose coronation Briton, Saxon and Dane alike were represented.

The unity thus secured was not a unity due to community of race; it was a unity of common interest, finally, and in many cases forcibly, effected in spite of diversity of race. Even where the union was not accomplished by warlike means, it was not due to original racial unity, but to other causes, which, with equal effect, extended the environment of the separate peoples to include those of their hitherto hostile neighbours. The Goths of Kent became united to the Saxons of Wessex, not because they were racially one with them, but because the intermarrying of the two royal houses at last accidentally made the heir of the one kingdom the heir of the other as well.

But whether the amalgamation was effected by peaceful or violent means the result was the same; and the political environment of all Englishmen was identified under a common law, a central administration and a common ideal of kingship.

The national community of interest thus established was further corroborated by the long national struggle against the Danes, and by the measures which the national kings, especially Alfred, took to secure the national existence against them. Alfred's army and Alfred's fleet were at once a symbol of the national consciousness and a rampart of the national existence. The fleet was a natural result of the change of political environment effected by the discovery, cruelly driven home by the Danes, that England was an island. The people as a whole seem to have forgotten that primal factor in their situation. That love and mastery of the sea which are supposed to be the racial endowment of the Anglo-Saxon have, of course, been dependent for their existence upon favourable conditions of environment. The inland Germans of Tacitus naturally did not possess them; equally naturally they were the portion of the maritime Suiones of the Baltic Islands, and of the Frisians who in his time occupied the district

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from which at a later date the Angles, Saxons and Jutes came upon England in their long ships. "The English," says Prof. Oman, "seem to have lost for many generations their old efficiency at sea: we hear nothing of a fighting fleet between the days of Ecgrith of Northumbria and those of the great Alfred."<sup>1</sup> These considerations suggest that too much weight is sometimes attached to purely geographical environment as an influence upon national character. The maritime Anglo-Saxons, enveloped for several centuries in an environment of agricultural, pastoral and military occupations, acquired a diminished sense of their marine surroundings, and Alfred had to obtain Frisian pirates to man his ships, although the Frisians had formed a numerous and important element in the original Anglo-Saxon invasions. That the return to a national consciousness of the sea was followed by a revival of the old love and mastery of it was an inevitable result, and these qualities have waxed or waned in our national character as we have been more or less driven to a consciousness of our insular position and its necessities. It is significant to remember in this connexion that Alfred made a collection of ancient English Sagas, and, if we may judge of them by the surviving specimens of Anglo-Saxon poetry, notably the *Beowulf*, the *Wanderer*, the *Seafarer* and the *Far Traveller*, they would supply a living stream of inspiration to the awakening maritime consciousness of the people.<sup>2</sup>

It is no doubt with justice, however, that in Alfred's time greater importance was attached to the army than to the fleet as a symbol of national life and an instrument of national defence. Before his reign the *fyrð*, or army of the separate shires, had been formed of hasty levies of ceorls and ploughmen called from their occupations on the land to meet immediate requirements, thus producing an institution whose weakness and want of cohesion were soon demonstrated in face of the more

<sup>1</sup> *England before the Norman Conquest*, by Charles Oman, M.A. (Methuen & Co., 1910).

<sup>2</sup> "There are more than a score of literal terms for the sea in Anglo-Saxon, and the figurative terms are legion."—*Germanic Origins: a Study in Primitive Culture*, by Francis B. Gummere, Ph.D. (D. Nutt, 1892).

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expert and better disciplined Danish warriors. Alfred's establishment of the system of military boroughs, by which fortified strongholds were garrisoned by settlers who were held responsible for their defence in return for the right of cultivating the land which surrounded them, was accompanied by an arrangement for calling out only one half of the army at a time, the other half relieving the former at fixed intervals.<sup>1</sup>

But probably the most effective means towards creating a sense of national identity was one which, if not introduced by Alfred, was, at any rate, in full working order shortly after his death. This was the conversion of the thegnhood into a professional military class, consisting, not only of the nobility, but of ceorls and merchants possessed of certain specified qualifications which were acquired without difficulty by the more energetic members of the community.<sup>2</sup> The existence of the thegnhood in England is an illustration of the permanence of traditional institutions when the environment is not hostile to their continuance. We have seen in the account of Tacitus that certain chiefs, possessed of personal influence, surrounded themselves with a following of noble youths, who formed their *comitatus* or bodyguard. In the laws of Æthelberht of Kent (A.D. 687) we find the existence of the King's *comitatus* quite clearly defined. It appears to be composed of two classes, known by the designations of *gesith*, or companion, and *thegn*, or warrior-servant. The former was a landed proprietor who was a regular member of the royal army; the latter was still a household retainer of the King, as yet unendowed with the reward of land.<sup>3</sup> In the laws of the West Saxons as promulgated by

<sup>1</sup> Oman, pp. 468-9.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Stanley Leathes will only allow us to say: "perhaps the thanes were generally *eorls*, but not always" (p. 52). Maitland states that "the prosperous ceorl will be no thegn until he has put himself under some lord" (*Domesday Book and Beyond*, p. 164).

<sup>3</sup> Oman, p. 354. Sir Stanley Leathes (p. 52) says: "Thanes—i. e. strong men, young men, warriors."—"They attached themselves to some great man, lived in his house, looked to him for food and drink, clothing and arms." They were clearly the great man's warrior-servants. "The thegn is somebody's thegn" (Maitland, p. 163). In *Domesday Book*, however, the King's thanes are often contrasted with the King's



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King Ine (A.D. 693) a clear distinction is drawn between those who are personal servants of the King and those who are not. In the barbarous legal Latin of the time the two ranks are distinguished under the titles of *sithcundus homo* (gesith) and *cyriliscus homo* (ceorl), and the former class constituted a fully established nobility, who were such by virtue of their service to the King.<sup>1</sup>

It was upon the existence of this distinction that Alfred, if Alfred it was, founded that extension of the thegnhood which firmly laid the foundations not only of a national army but of a national aristocracy as well. The ceorl who "throve so that he had fully five hides of land, and a helm and mail shirt, and a sword ornamented with gold," and some other specified qualifications, was "thegn-right worthy" or "gesithcund." The merchant, too, the city-dweller, "who has fared three times over the high seas at his own expense" is also entitled to promotion.<sup>2</sup> Such an extension of the nobility by the recognition of a claim to admission to its ranks on the part of considerable numbers of the more respectable and intelligent of the commons would

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Servants. For the whole question see pp. 163 *sqq.* of Maitland, who says that "this institution has undergone many changes in the course of a long history." While avoiding dogmatism, we can safely quote the thegnhood as an illustration of the general principle propounded in the text; in it we see an example of the process by which institutions arising from a specific social need are adapted to meet other social needs created by the evolving organism of society. This account of the matter is quite clear from Maitland's description of the changes traceable in the evolution of the thegnhood. "The King's thegns are his free servants—servants, but also companions. Then the King—and other great lords follow his example—begins to give lands to his thegns, and thus the nature of the thegnship is modified. The thegn no longer lives in his lord's Court; he is a warrior endowed with land. Then the thegnship becomes more than a relationship, it becomes a status.—This status seems to be hereditary" (p. 163). Personal attendant in peace or war; landed proprietor; hereditary aristocrat—these are the broad steps of the process.

<sup>1</sup> Oman, pp. 354-62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 470-1. Maitland: "The ceorl obtains the thegnly wergild if he has an estate rated for military purposes at five hides. Another version of this tradition requires of the ceorl 'who thrives to thegn-right' five hides of his own land, a church, a kitchen, a house in the *burh*, a special office in the King's hall. To be 'worthy of thegn-right' may be one thing, to be a thegn another" (p. 164).

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aid to consolidate national feeling by focussing the personal attention of a constantly increasing number of his subjects upon the King as the symbol of national unity. As the new thegns would naturally be men of influence in their own neighbourhoods, both from their personal character and the number of their dependents, we can see in this creation of an aristocracy a consolidation of national feeling, not only among the thegns themselves, but also among the proletariat over whom they had legal or personal power. A similar influence was exercised by the large body of clergy following upon the conversion of the English to Christianity; but, as the work of the Church in creating and fostering national sentiment was less political in the narrower sense than social in the wider sense, we shall deal with her contribution to national unity when touching upon the causes which operated to bring about the social unity of the nation.

So far, however, we can clearly see that the process of national development was a process which involved the commingling of previously separate environments, whether under influences operating within the national sphere or influences operating upon the national sphere from without. We see how a traditional environment is modified by the admission of elements from the outside, and how the new elements combine with the original tradition to form a new environment, which is handed down to the next generation to be adapted and modified by a similar process. Institutions and characteristics are not modified by the immission of new blood into the bodies of the people who possess them, but by the admission of new influences which operate from outside upon the minds and bodies of the people. Peoples of allied racial origin who indulge in fratricidal conflict no more than peoples of different racial origin who indulge in intertribal conflict can resist the amalgamating power of a common political environment, common political necessities and common political ambitions.

This conclusion is still more firmly established when we turn from the political to the social history of our Anglo-Saxon predecessors. We are still, even in the twentieth century, apparently a long way off from the identification of the social and political spheres of our

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national life. We have not yet solved the problem of how to make our political institutions an adequate expression of our social needs, although step by step and precedent by precedent we still continue our ancient tradition of making the bounds of freedom wider yet, broadening our polity to include ever more numerous social groups, and interfusing its administration with a finer spirit of social justice. But in England before the Conquest, and for a long time after it, the fusion was little advanced, and, although there are certain aspects of national life which exhibit the two forces in sympathetic contact, yet, speaking in a general sense, we should only court inextricable confusion by trying to describe them in the same story. Happily, the final result of social progress, as of political progress, was a well-marked approach towards national unity, and we hope to indicate that in the social, as in the political sphere, the result was not due to the commingling of separate racial elements in our blood, but to the commingling of separate atmospheres to form the general national environment.

After the warrior bands who made Romanized England their prey had conquered and devastated enough to make their footing sure, we find them settling down into innumerable separate social units of the same type as those described for us in the pages of the "Germany" of Tacitus. "All over England," as Kemble says, "there soon existed a network of communities, the principle of whose being was separation, as regarded each other; the most intimate union, as regarded the individual members of each. Agricultural, not commercial, dispersed, not centralized, content within their own limits and little given to wandering, they relinquished in a great degree the habits and feelings which had united them as military adventurers; and the spirit which had achieved the conquest of an empire was now satisfied with the care of maintaining inviolate a little peaceful plot, sufficient for the cultivation of a few simple households."<sup>1</sup> Whatever view we may adopt of the origin of these "village communities"—whether we agree with Sir Henry Maine that they are an Aryan

<sup>1</sup> *The Saxons in England*, by John Mitchell Kemble (Bernard Quaritch, 1876), Vol. I. pp. 70-1. Cf. pp. 56-7.



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institution; with Mr. Hewitt that as regards India, South-western Asia and South-eastern Europe they were "fully developed before the Aryan race had started from North-western Europe"; with Mr. Seebohm that they are the gift of Roman civilization to Britain; or with Sir Laurence Gomme that they are an almost universal institution of a primeval type<sup>1</sup>—there can, at any rate, be no doubt that Anglo-Saxon social life was originally centred in the security of their existence. The type of the English village community is clearly defined in all the authors who have variously explained its original formation. We recall how in the description of Tacitus the warriors fought in clans, and, quite in harmony with this military practice, the agricultural settlement, in theory at least, consisted of a group of ceorls descended from common ancestors, or from the hero of the particular tribe. Even from the point of view which regards the progress of civilization as dependent upon tradition and not upon race, the kinship of the members of the community cannot be regarded otherwise than as a potent element in establishing and confirming the communal environment. That it is not actually race itself which operates in forming and consolidating the communal institutions and character is proved by the fact that, even where the family relationship is not real but imaginary, the imagination has all the effect which follows from the reality. It is a perfectly unnecessary and unstable hypothesis that, where all the members of the community have been nourished on the same tradition, a greater or less degree of communal sentiment would follow upon a closer or more distant relationship to the original founder of the tribe. Just as most of us to-day know some Frenchman or Italian who, matured in English surroundings, is more English than the English in his patriotic sympathies, so we easily admit that a Billing adopted into a Harling tribe would soon take a sympathetic interest in life from the point of view of

<sup>1</sup> *The Ruling Races of Prehistoric Times in India, South-Western Asia and Southern Europe*, by J. F. Hewitt (Constable, 1894), Essay III.; *The English Village Community*, by Frederic Seebohm (Longmans, 1883); *The Village Community*, by George Laurence Gomme (W. Scott, 1890).

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the Harlings.<sup>1</sup> It is certainly difficult to imagine that any of the separate communities of the Anglo-Saxons found themselves entirely of unmixed descent after the rough and tumble of two centuries of warfare, with its alliances born of military requirements and its necessary recruiting of depleted clans from any source that accident provided. Marriage, adoption, emancipation, would all operate to extend the numbers of the clan and to bind the new entrants with the bond of the already existing communal traditions and practices. The interesting account which Sir Laurence Gomme has given of the survival of clan feuds in England, as, for example, at Scarborough, Ludlow, and Derby—the Shrove Tuesday *mêlée* on the South Sands at Scarborough, the tug-of-war at Ludlow, the "football match" at Derby—lead him to the conclusion that "we have in these modern games the surviving relics of the earliest conditions of village life and organization, when different clans settled down side by side, but always with the recollection of their tribal distinctions."<sup>2</sup> So early in our history do we perceive that the progress of civilization is dependent upon the intermingling of different communal traditions. The evidence which Sir Laurence has collected elsewhere pointing to the existence of Celtic elements (not to speak of Danish) in the English village community serves to corroborate this view, and to suggest, what is rendered highly probable from other sources, that the environment of the Anglo-Saxons was not so little affected by the pre-existing Celtic environment as is frequently maintained by learned historians, whose opinions, however, are losing their weight as modern investigators accumulate evidence pointing in a contrary direction. Leaving aside the as yet unsettled question whether the *laets* in the Kentish King Ethelberht's classification of his subjects into earls, ceorls and *laets* were Celtic

<sup>1</sup> *The Making of an Englishman*, by W. L. George (Constable & Co., 1914), is a brilliant and effective exposition of the process. "I have lost the feeling of Trafalgar, lost the feeling of Waterloo, lost them so completely that like a born Londoner I have forgotten the blood and smoke that soil those rich names, and that they awaken in my mind no idea save 'open space' and 'railway station'" (p. 6). It is a "Frenchman" who says this.

<sup>2</sup> *The Village Community*, pp. 241-2.

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or English, we can quote the laws of the West Saxon King Ine as incontestably proving that "the royal following included men of Celtic blood, as well as English gesithcund men," and that "Wessex was full of great landowners holding ten or twenty hides from the King, and working these hides by the labour of peasant families, English or Welsh, who paid them rent and service."<sup>1</sup> Some of the early charters of the English kings bear Welsh names among their signatures, and the intermarriage of Welsh and English princes is by no means an uncommon occurrence. It seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that the final termination of hostilities between British and English left considerable numbers of the former peacefully settled among the latter, and adding the influence of their ancient tradition to the social and educational environment of their conquerors. This conclusion furnishes the most natural explanation, not only of the survival of the Celtic elements in the English village communities, but also for the persistence, especially in districts little affected by the influence of modern culture and civilization, of those primeval elements in our folklore which are admittedly not of English origin. Even if we were compelled to limit our conclusions to those based upon evidence of the concubinage of the Welsh women with Englishmen—a necessarily frequent and notorious occurrence with men who paid so high a regard to the chastity of their own women as the Anglo-Saxons—we should still be obliged to maintain that through this irregular channel much of the Celtic tradition must find its way into English circles, because, although an established tradition is best protected by the sacred bulwarks of the lawful family, we cannot suppose that the children of Welsh mothers learnt nothing from their teaching.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Oman, pp. 363-4.

<sup>2</sup> "If, as Professor Rolleston supposes, the skulls teach that wholesale importations of Saxon women were unfrequent, we may safely infer considerable intermarriage between Teuton and Celt" (Johnson's *Folk-Memory*, p. 94). On the previous page he quotes Frederick York Powell: "It is probable that the *thegen* and *geneat* (squire and yeoman) and village tradesmen, save, perhaps, the smith, were mostly of English blood, with such mixture as marriage or concubinage with the British



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Already, then, almost at the commencement of the history of the Anglo-Saxons, we have evidence of that commingling of traditions which dissolves the barriers of race, and endows a settlement composed of various elements with that community of interest out of which the communal conscience springs. This community of interest was further strengthened and consolidated by the effective force of common local associations. The village community, as we have seen, was a self-centred institution, "possessing in itself its own desire." It settled itself down, as in the days described by Tacitus, around some spring or plain, or near some grove, and there re-established its primeval system of "open field" cultivation. Shunning at first the contact of towns, disregarding the value of the Roman roads as means of intercommunication, the *maegth*, or kindred, proceeded to divide its land among the free householders, who thus found their only peaceful means of support in agricultural and pastoral occupations. The large open fields for ploughing were each divided into many narrow strips; each family possessed normally a strip in this field, a strip in that, and perhaps several strips elsewhere. In summer the meadowland was also apportioned into lots, but in winter it reverted to the state of common land. Beyond the agricultural and pastoral limits of the settlement was the forest, which furnished fuel to the community at large, with mast for the swine and some rough grazing for the cattle. Wheat, barley and oats then, as now, were the main agricultural products; alternative crops followed each other in two successive years, and in the third the land lay fallow.

We are without details as to the first establishment of these little settlements in the conquered British country; but it is natural to believe that the state of warfare during which they originated would fix the tenure upon which they were held. We have already seen how, on the political side, the nobility, whether of

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women caused; the other classes, over most of the island, were probably largely of Celtic or pre-Celtic blood." Freeman also had to admit that the majority of British women would be spared to become the wives or concubines of the invaders (*Norman Conquest*, Chap. I). Dr. Hodgkin prefers "Anglo-Celt" to Anglo-Saxon "as the fitting designation of our race."

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birth or service, were connected with the King by a system of association based upon the grant of lands as a condition of military or personal attendance, and that the nobility in their turn apportioned their holdings among the free ceorls upon similar conditions. Already in the seventh century Wessex is divided into estates—consisting of *hams* or *tuns*—which in all essential features anticipate the Norman manor, which was, of course, a village community farming an estate under the jurisdiction of a lord. The *maegh* was, therefore, not only welded together by a theoretically common relationship, but also by the social prominence of the noble landowner to whom its members owed service of field labour or personal attendance.

In this self-centred settlement, then, we have the social unit of the Anglo-Saxon community, with its own courts of justice, its own arrangements for protection and defence, its own social institutions and necessarily its own keen local patriotism. Whatever larger agglomerations the village communities may have formed in combination with other communities; whatever may have been their relationships to the shire, the province and the kingdom; these were more or less political in their nature, and it is to processes operating within the village community itself that we must look for the social development of the English people out of clannishness and particularism into nationality and Imperial patriotism. Even nowadays, when every Englishman is born into a society receiving influences from sources not only national but international in their bearing, we find that national patriotism frequently has its basis in love of the particular piece of land with which the youthful eye and mind were first familiarized. The process by which local sentiment is merged in national consciousness is now consummated in the youth and early manhood of the individual citizen; it was the same process which occupied many centuries in the development of our national history. Just as a great Imperial statesman's protective care of his country's destinies is coloured by the tender memory of some retired and long-unvisited spot on the bleak wolds of Yorkshire, or in the wild valleys of Wales, so the growth

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of Anglo-Saxon patriotism had its roots in that devotion which every human heart pays abundantly to the *religio loci*.<sup>1</sup> Every member of the village community almost of necessity formed personal relationships with every foot of the communal holding. He knew it all, "from the otter-hole to the ford; from the ford to Wotan's ridge; then up along the arable land to the old dyke; along the dyke to the staple; from the staple upward to Attendene; from the dene towards the Avon to the great bank; then to the death-pool; from the death-pool to the broad army road; then along the narrow way towards the arable land; then to the great thoroughfare to the chalk-pit; from the pit along the dyke by the elder-stump; from the stump to the (river) Wily."<sup>2</sup> In legal documents the boundaries are mostly defined by these minute details; and frequently there are associated with these local descriptions personal names, some of them mythological, as in the case of Wotan above, some of them belonging to local personages who had contributed a special share to the growing tradition of the community.

These familiar local associations, appealing to all the community, helped as much to weld them into one body as the common lord, the common institutions and the ceremonies of the common worship. Dr. Hearn has remarked of the Aryan settlement in general: "It was not the tie of blood, or of family habit, or of superior physical force, that held men together, but the far more potent bond of a common worship,"<sup>3</sup> and in the Teutonic settlement the worship itself is largely bound up with territorial associations. It is upon the evidence of local names—names yet existent in England under more or less varied forms—that we are largely dependent

<sup>1</sup> This is an element perhaps more conspicuous in French patriotism than in British. Lord Esher has emphasized the young Frenchman's "passion for France, her sacred soil, and her sunshine that ripens the vineyards and beats upon her wide fields and forests" (Letter to *Morning Post*, Oct. 7, 1918). But the sentiment is not absent in the young (or the old) Englishman either.

<sup>2</sup> *The Arts in Early England*, by G. Baldwin Brown, M.A. (John Murray, 1903), pp. 87-8.

<sup>3</sup> See Gomme, p. 129, quoting from Hearn's *Aryan Household*: "Those who worshipped the same gods were relatives."



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for our knowledge of the broad features of Scandinavian Paganism as it existed here after the Invasion. That the cult of Thor was established throughout the Island is demonstrated by the number of names of places compounded with his name; but it is quite in harmony with all we know of the cults of the Aryan peoples that the gods worshipped by the village were regarded as the gods of the village, and not the gods of the people as a whole. The Grendels and Nicors—the spirits of the wood and the mere—had their grim habitations in the neighbouring marsh and in the forest that enfolded the settlement in its gloomy embrace. There was nothing in the religion of our Pagan ancestors which inculcated the spirit of cosmopolitanism or the habit of universal sympathy. That task was the special prerogative of Christianity; and it was in the conversion of the people to that faith that we must place the first great expansion in the narrow boundaries of the isolated village settlement. As Kemble has said, “the *religio loci* cannot be transported,”<sup>1</sup> and it was, therefore, only in a religion which was based upon principles and sentiments which transcended all local limitations that we can look for the main inspiration of a process which expanded local particularism into the more generous emotion of national patriotism.

Certain it is, at any rate, that the establishment of Christianity in England profoundly modified the whole character of the communal life. The wandering monks and episcopal missionaries who traversed every district of the country brought with them, apart from their definite teaching, associations of the outside world which, intermingling with the ancient village tradition, endowed it with a larger outlook and a broader sympathy. That elements of the old faith survived in the reign of the new, not only in the legends and superstitions which still linger on in the countryside, but also as an integral part of the national faith, is not a matter of any doubt. After the advent of Christianity, “the Anglosaxon united the realm of Hel with Nástrond to complete a hideous prison for the guilty. The prevailing idea in the infernal regions of the Teuton is cold and

<sup>1</sup> Kemble, Vol. I. p. 441.

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gloom; the poisonous snakes, which waking or sleeping seem ever to have haunted the Anglosaxon, formed a convenient point of junction between his own traditional Hell and that which he heard of from the pulpit in quotations from the works of the Fathers; and to these and their influence alone can it be attributed when we find flames and sulphur, and all the hideous apparatus of Judaic tradition, adopted by him."<sup>1</sup> But it was not modification of this kind alone that the ancient traditions underwent. The brotherhood of man was never taught with so much enthusiasm as by these Christian missionaries to the Northern Pagans; and the calmer virtues of the Christian life displaced in practice as well as in theory the old Pagan warrior qualities already weakened by long cessation from military adventures. Again, it was no change of race, but a modification of environment, which effected a change in the character of the Pagan Anglo-Saxon. Even in the matter of slavery, the teaching of the Church, though halting and inconsistent, was not without unmistakable effect. The establishment of monasteries and their employment of numerous artificers brought the village populations into contact with men tinged with Continental associations; while the foundation of village churches, which became the centres of the social as well as the religious life of the community, expanded their interest in the direction of foreign arts and crafts of various descriptions. The curtains of Oriental tapestry which protected the worshipper from the wind that whistled through the sacred walls were imitated by the busy labour of local dames and their maidens; and art, stimulated by religious devotion, found a more energetic expression in secular and social activities. The village community, falling ever more and more effectively under the influence of the clergy in its midst, was not allowed to forget that it was an isolated settlement no longer, but a living part of that ecclesiastical polity which was the organized expression of the religious life of the nation.

The Church, therefore, while profoundly modifying the local life of the community considered in itself,

<sup>1</sup> Kemble, Vol. I. pp. 393-4.

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exercised an important influence in building up that sense of corporate unity upon which national life and national consciousness are founded.

If, leaving the narrow limits of the once self-centred village life, we turn to the broader problem of national existence as a whole, we find the Church exercising a dominant influence in two different but allied directions. Christianity brought the country into the sphere of international comity by making her a member of that great community of peoples who owned the spiritual sway of Rome. While this laid her open to many foreign contacts which broadened her interests and enriched her environment, it also served to emphasize her position as a national unit among other national units in the terrestrial *civitas Dei* which it was the honourable ambition of Rome to make coterminous with the inhabited globe.

But the most important influence which the Church in England had in developing the sense of national unity was due to the fact that from the outset she had the character, which she never wholly lost, of being, not the Church *in* England, but the Church *of* England. Thanks partly to the fact that the English did not receive their ecclesiastical organization at the hands of the Romanized Celtic Church of Britain and Ireland, and partly to the fact that the invaders of England escaped the Romanizing influences to which their Teutonic brethren had succumbed on the European continent, the Church of England secured and maintained a position of national independence which was never enjoyed by the Churches of Gaul or the Empire. The great Pope Gregory warned his bishops not to impose upon the new English Church the fetters of a cut-and-dried ecclesiastical system, whether of administration or dogma.<sup>1</sup> Although the Italian Hadrian and the Greek Theodore ruled in their day at Canterbury, yet the highest spiritual dignities were mainly held by Englishmen like Aldhelm, Alcuin, Cuthbert and Wilfrith; while the bulk of the inferior clergy were English who had little Latin, and were quite content to take their

<sup>1</sup> "Conversion of the West." *The English*, by the Rev. G. F. Maclear, D.D. (London: S.P.C.K.), Chaps. III. and XIII.



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spiritual laws from their temporal king. Lectures, ritual, prayers and sermons were early embodied in the English tongue, which was made the vehicle of a continual series of more or less edifying homilies familiarizing clergy and laity alike with the teaching of the Church. Mass itself was never read wholly in Latin; and the Wedding Service used in our churches to-day preserves something of the sound and substance of the early Anglo-Saxon form. The Roman celibacy of the clergy was a custom more honoured in the breach than in the observance so far as England was concerned, where even the normal restrictions as regards marriage had to be modified by Papal indulgence to national freedom. The perseverance of the Teutonic tradition of inebriety, which we saw established in the days of Tacitus and perpetuated in those of *Beowulf*, was evidenced in the Anglo-Saxon clergy by the frequency of the prohibitions issued to cope with it.

This tendency to social unity, largely strengthened by the ministrations of the Christian clergy, was equally effectual in the spheres of law and politics. It is wrong to say, with our brilliant historian Green, that at the end of the seventh century national unity rested on no basis but the sword; but he is justly entitled to say that the work of the Greek Archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore (A.D. 669-690), in giving the national Church that form which it has to-day, "clothed" that unity "with a sacred form and surrounded it with divine sanctions." "The single throne of the one primate at Canterbury accustomed men's minds to the thought of a single throne for their one temporal overlord at York, or, as in later days, at Lichfield or at Winchester. The regular subordination of priest to bishop, of bishop to primate, in the administration of the Church, supplied a mould on which the civil organization of the State quietly shaped itself." "Above all, the councils gathered by Theodore were the first of all national gatherings for general legislation. It was at a much later time that the Wise Men of Wessex or Northumbria or Mercia learned to come together in the Witenagemot of all England. It was the ecclesiastical synods which by this example led the way to our national Parliament,

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as it was the canons enacted in such synods which led the way to a national system of law."<sup>1</sup>

The work of the Church, therefore, cannot be too highly esteemed, both in its permeation of the old tradition with newer influences from external sources and in consolidating the combined result against the inrush of further foreign influences of too universal a character.

But great as the work of the Church was, it was not the only influence operating to the introduction of new contacts into the national environment. The growth of the towns, with their admittedly freer intercourse of Celt and Teuton and foreigner; the secular relationships of trade and commerce; the profane experiences undergone by the numerous pilgrims who wandered Romewards; the inter-relationships of the Courts of England with those of the Empire, France and Lombardy; the Danish Monarchy, with its final amalgamation of the two peoples allied in their origin and their ancient traditions—all these operated in the direction of producing a combined nationality which, although strongly felt, was not sufficiently coherent or powerful to resist the military attack of the Normans, with their crowd of newer and more energetic influences. The Norman Conquest, which unsettled the English tradition, did not overwhelm it, and the history of England after that event is but a repetition of the old story of the absorption of the newer elements into the older society, and the eventual combination of the two in a greatly altered but more enduring form. It is the old story, indeed—the story of the impotence of race as a factor in human development, and the omnipotence of environment in welding different races into social and political harmony. These lessons are clear from our brief *résumé* of Anglo-Saxon history, and the repetition of the same processes in the succeeding stages of our history has eventually resulted in welding all the variegated new interests that have poured into us from time to time into that community of interest, and that community of national character born of common interest, which are the marks of British nationality as it exists to-day.

<sup>1</sup> Green, *Short History*, under "Theodore, 669-690."

## CHAPTER X

English Nationality and the Norman Conquest—The Results of the Conquest not due to the Operation of "racial" Factors, but to the Commingling of different Traditions—The Principle of Centralization and the Principle of Disruption in the Feudal System as learnt by the Normans in France—Triumph of the Principle of Centralization in the Consolidation of (1) Monarchy, (2) Law, (3) Parliament, and in the Substitution of symbolic Monarchy for personal Monarchy—The Principle of Nationality victorious over the Principle of Cosmopolitanism inherent in the Papal Conception of a universal spiritual Empire—Spread of British Nationality to Wales, Scotland, Ireland, the Colonies and the Dependencies—The British Empire.

So profound, so dominating, and so vital is the sense of nationality at the present day that it is difficult to recognize that it is not a fundamental and primitive instinct of human nature, but a habit of slow growth whose development is subject to a thousand influences which may thwart it, deflect it, annihilate it, or, on the other hand, may foster it, direct it, bring it to the fruition of a sacred patriotism. Just as in the individual citizen patriotism, like other virtues, has to be taught by the forces of education and social environment, so a group of peoples, a collection of communities, a juxtaposition of "races," are consolidated, by the driving impulsion of circumstances and of the lessons learnt from them, into a homogeneous association which presents a united front to all external forces whatsoever, whether hostile or benevolent. The consciousness of nationality is not a fatal and ineluctable result of powers and tendencies inherent either in the human race as a whole or in any section of it. Always its formation depends on circumstances, and when, in any particular example, we are able to watch the historical rise of the national spirit and its creation of a national organization, it is with an emotion of constant wonder that we find harmony and order gradually winning the day over particularist and disruptive tendencies on the one hand, and, on the other, over



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that universalism which would endeavour to bind men together as being possessed of the same human nature, or as members of some cosmopolitan organization such as trade or religion, instead of as subjected to the same social and political environment.

We have already suggested that national development is due to the reciprocal influence of the environment upon the mind of a people, and of the mind of the people upon the environment, and that Nature herself, never producing two persons alike, has allowed for infinite possibilities in the methods and direction of social evolution. The path of our own national life, for example, has hesitated at many cross-roads; has even lingered in "way-side glens of rest"; has been stationary or even gone back on its own traces. And yet, when we behold our Imperial nationality to-day as a powerful and organic phenomenon, it appears to be based so firmly and inevitably upon the nature of things in themselves that it needs explanation and apology as little as the sun and the stars, the mountains and the sea; and often it scarcely seems a metaphor to ascribe it, as the pious and patriotic Greek ascribed the origins of his own city, to divine agencies working out in conscious and deliberate purpose a result designed before the beginning of years.

But when we look more closely into the matter, even ever so superficially, we find that the growth of British nationality has depended upon conditions which were to a large extent accidental in the usual sense of that term, and that it was quite as possible for social and political development in England to take the line of local disintegration as it was for it to take the line of centralized harmony. The creation of a common sphere of interest for different communities depends, not only upon an infinite variety of circumstances, but upon the way in which the minds of men in general are led to use these circumstances; and accident plays a great part both in effecting various combinations of circumstances and in producing the minds that can use them. It cannot be supposed a fatal and foreordained, a predestinate and ineluctable, issue of the Norman Conquest, for example, that the immature and fluctuating sense of nationality which obtained in England at the time of Edward the

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Confessor should not only have survived the devastating shock of that stern invasion, but that it should have found something in the apparently overwhelming inrush of hostile elements to nurture it, organize it, and bring it to self-conscious and confident maturity, as a child may be brought to strong, happy and resolute youth by some devastating disciplinary experience. The Norman Conquest, however, not only introduced forces which consolidated English nationality, but it contained large disruptive elements, and the fascination of the early history of England, after that event, surely lies, not in the power we possess of turning to the last page of the story and finding that it ended happily, but in following the fluctuating progress of the national tendency until we learn in due course that the interplay of human action and circumstance gradually brought about the result we now find so desirable.

It is, of course, no part of the writer's task, were he happily capable of it, to retell the story of the British Empire, even ever so briefly, although he believes that, were he to retell it, even ever so fully, the result would be but the more clearly to show that the development of nationality is but the growth of organic continuity of common interest as that process has been already explained. But as he has endeavoured to suggest how the sense of nationality was formed, before the Norman Conquest, by the pressure of common environmental events and circumstances, checking, moulding, mingling and unifying a multiplicity of local and separatist interests, rendered more intricate, as these frequently were, by the importation of alien elements; so it might be thought that he was false to the natural development of his argument if he shirked the attempt to describe how that feeling of national unity was, by the influence of subsequent domestic and foreign events and by the action of domestic and foreign personalities, saved from a reversion to local selfishness and strengthened into something approaching its present dominating and enthralling shape. In his effort to do this, he will endeavour to lay appropriate emphasis upon the continuous elements in our national progress, while indicating with sufficient clearness the importance of the newer

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influences which broadened without loss of vitality, varied without loss of identity, that stream of tradition which connects each succeeding generation with its predecessors by a bond more sacred and impressive than the often imaginary bond of racial descent. The bond of racial descent is far from being a connecting link between all the people that inhabit these Islands to-day and those who inhabited them a thousand years ago; but the bond of common effort and common sacrifice towards building up the mighty Imperial nation we have now become—that is a final, an indissoluble and a universal bond.

And at the outset it seems desirable to dispose of any possibility that the shibboleths of the race-worshippers may have greater validity in this particular case than they have been proved to possess in general. If the results of the Norman Conquest and settlement of Britain were due to the infusion of new blood into the veins and arteries of the English, we should have had to wait for these results during that indefinitely prolonged number of generations which, upon the theories of the scientific racialists, it takes to produce a new mental quality, even when the nuptial partners can be chosen upon the "scientific" principles of the stud-groom and the poultry-farmer: principles which, we may venture to guess, did not inspire or guide the embraces of Norman soldier and Saxon maiden. The political, social and economic effects of the Conquest began to make themselves felt in England at once; and although these results in their entirety had to await, and are still awaiting, final consummation by the continued process of social intermingling, yet that process has been gradual and accumulative in its operation, and in its immediate initiation after the Conquest we find a sufficient explanation of the newer national characteristics which followed in its train. Miss Mary Bateson, whose masculine grasp of facts and feminine patience in dealing with them have placed all students of this period in her permanent debt, states, nevertheless, that "the great feudalists whom William endowed shared with him *the racial genius* for government which showed itself, not in England only, but likewise in Sicily."<sup>1</sup> But, as a matter of fact, the

<sup>1</sup> *Medieval England, 1066-1350*, by Mary Bateson (T. Fisher Unwin, 1903). The gratitude here expressed to Miss Bateson would be extended



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main qualities which the Normans exhibited in England were not the gift of their "race" at all, but the result of the special experiences which they had undergone during their occupation of that part of France to which they had given their own name. That in the century and a half during which they had lived in Normandy (A.D. 912-1066) the ancient traditional qualities of the Scandinavian people to which they belonged had been allowed to die out entirely, would be a gratuitous and unnatural supposition. Such traditions as those of the Vikings die a hard death. The romantic love of military adventure is a passion that lingers long in any community where it has once held sway; and a feudalized district in the north of France in the tenth and eleventh centuries can hardly be said to have furnished an environment unfavourable to such a tradition. It is true that from seamen they had become landsmen, a change which notoriously affects national character; and in many other respects they had suffered wonderful transmutations. Their predominant "racial" quality seems to have greatly resembled the predominant "racial" quality of the Jews—the quality of rapidly adopting the "racial" qualities of other peoples in place of their own. They forgot their own language; and William himself tried in vain to learn it again when he found its like in England. They adopted instead that quaint dialect of Romance-Walloon which then passed for French in those parts, and their adaptability to its use was one of the great contributory causes of the subsequent perfection of the *Langue d'oïl*. But they contrived to learn English before long and, if they spoke French at all, to speak it as a foreign fashion and not as a national tradition. Equally they deserted the religion of their "race," and became Catholics, apparently without suffering any corresponding change of complexion or cranial shape. Garb, manners, customs, laws, weapons, were no longer Danish, but French; although, of the last, Freeman says that the Norman soon learned to handle them with greater prowess than they had ever been

to Dr. Maitland, except that it would be impertinence in a mere layman to praise the work of so great an historical specialist.—*The Constitutional History of England*, by F. W. Maitland, LL.D. (Cambridge University Press, 1908).

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handled before. That erudite historian adds, concerning the results of their transformation from Northmen to Normans, that they "adopted a new religion, a new language, a new system of law and society, *new thoughts and feelings on all matters*"; and yet he states that "their national character remains largely the same," an academic plea that we can pass by with a look if we are allowed to believe that in practice they exhibited "new thoughts and feelings on all matters," since it was very largely these new thoughts and feelings which were to regulate their work upon the existing substratum of Anglo-Saxon civilization when once their ancient military prowess had got them settled in Britain.<sup>1</sup> The entirely different work which they accomplished in Italy, when the adventurous valour of Roger de Hauteville and his little group of Norman knights, leading a conglomerate group of all sorts of European free lances, had gained for him the crown of the Two Sicilies, was due to the ready adaptability of the Norman genius to different conditions, to its unconscious ignorance of racial theories and to its grasp upon objective realities.

For these special reasons, in addition to those general considerations worked out at more detail in earlier chapters, it is proposed to neglect the racial theory in all its supposed bearings upon the Norman Conquest, and to show how the amalgamation of the British and foreign elements into one enduringly cohesive community was due to the operation of circumstances and the work of personalities, diminishing the spheres of the hostile interests of the two peoples, and increasing and finally identifying the spheres of their friendly interests, while still maintaining that progressive continuity between one generation and another which is, indeed, the "soul" of national existence.

Now whether it was due to the national genius of the Normans for adapting themselves to circumstances, or whether it was that William and his advisers were shrewd men of affairs who had already on the Continent discovered the great help which a judicious use of law can give to force, certain it is that the Norman Conquest exhibits at least one capital feature which became a

<sup>1</sup> See Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, Chap. IV; also his article on "The Norman" in *Ency. Brit.*, Vol. XVII, p. 547. (9th Ed.)

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characteristic principle of our public and private, our domestic and foreign, policies—the recognition, namely, that even a revolution is likely to have a better prospect of success if it clothes itself in the formal garb of existing laws and customs.<sup>1</sup> In seizing the conqueror's prize, William never advanced the conqueror's claim. He pretended—we need not inquire too closely with what justice—that he was the heir of Edward the Confessor, who, with all his Norman proclivities, was at least an English king; that Harold was a usurper, as indeed he was; that every Englishman who opposed him, William the Norman, was, *ipso facto*, a traitor whose life and lands were at the mercy of English law. This formal recognition of the validity of the English legal and constitutional system, wanting in honesty as it might be in the main fact of the imposition of a new master, had its actual realization in the new master's administration of the conquered territory. The English “rebels” whose estates were confiscated to the State, that is, to the monarch, the feudal representative of the State, were replaced by Normans and other followers of the Conqueror, who were regarded as subject to all the duties, and entitled to all the rights, which their predecessors had borne or enjoyed in accordance with the laws and customs of the country. The Royal Charters, whose Latin is sufficiently quaint though eminently practical, abandon any attempt to express in the consecrated legal language the purely English rights of *sac* and *soc*, of *thol* and *theam*, of *infang-thief* and *outfang-thief*, with which the royal will endows the new tenants of the old estates.<sup>2</sup> The composite character of the legal administration of

<sup>1</sup> “When Duke William became king of the English he found (so he well might think) among the most valuable of his newly acquired regalia a right to levy a land-tax under the name of geld or danegeld.”—*Domesday Book and Beyond*, p. 3. But the King was not the only Norman who could see the beauty of a Saxon precedent when it helped him to secure his ends; and Mr. Kipling, with great propriety, makes his Norman knight, Sir Richard, say: “I let the Saxons go their stubborn way, but when my own men-at-arms, Normans not six months in England, stood up and told me what was the custom of the country, then I was angry.”—*Puck of Pook's Hill*, 1st edition, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> This survival of Anglo-Saxon law terms in the Corpus of Norman law is merely one example of the general linguistic tendency of the time. Dealing with the language of the Norman period Sir Stanley Leathes corrects a famous passage in *Ivanhoe*, and points out that



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the country, the commingling of different atmospheres of juristic tradition, will be more clearly evident when we give even a brief examination to the main characteristics of the Feudal System. At present we merely note that, as the principles of legal and settled government began to take shape in the minds of men as a desirable check upon such tyranny as that of William II., there was started, within half a century of the Conquest, that infinite series of English law-books "which flows and, as it flows, for ever shall flow on." These early manuals clearly exhibit the conception of English law as a composite production, containing, side by side, provisions of the Theodosian Code, the Canon Law, the Salic Law and other legislation of the Frankish kings, legal precedents based on Anglo-Saxon dooms, the enactments of Norman kings, and the laws current in the various English courts at the time. The variegated texture of these books serves, not only to illustrate the principle of continuity in English law, but also to represent, in their variety and complexity, its haphazard growth to meet immediate needs, and the different traditions which have influenced the constitution of our national atmosphere.<sup>1</sup>

There can, at any rate, be no doubt that a great body of purely Anglo-Saxon tradition and practice survived the shock of the Norman Conquest and of the confisca-

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"most French-speaking men and women of fashion could not go through life without using many English words. There is much to be learned from such names and phrases concerning the manner in which Frenchmen and Englishmen worked together; the better things and pursuits are as often named in English as in French (p. 90). The "commingling of atmospheres" in our native tongue is too conspicuous to necessitate detailed treatment. Its foundation is Teutonic, but carries a mighty superstructure of Latin and Greek and Romantic speech. The Germans cannot translate Shakespeare because they have no Latin to do it with. "I am no orator, as Brutus is," is easily rendered, "Ich bin kein Redner als wie Brutus ist," but even in "Redner" we miss the Latin associations of "orator." But how translate "multitudinous seas incarnadine" where an absolutely unique effect is produced by the two massive Latin polysyllables buttressing the Teutonic monosyllable "seas"?

<sup>1</sup> "The jurists brought us that law of continuous growth which has transformed history from a chronicle of casual occurrences into the likeness of something organic" (Lord Acton: *Lectures on Modern History*).

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tions that followed it; but it would carry us too far beyond the necessities of our present purpose were we to show how the various royal and manorial courts in existence before the Conquest were modified by the organizing abilities and needs of the invaders, and how they were either strengthened and elevated into national courts and councils, or had their powers first restricted by the natural development of circumstances and then withdrawn to form part of the greater stream of national and constitutional progress. It will be sufficient for our case if we present in brief outline the general effect upon the growth of English nationality produced by the administrative and organizing skill and necessities of the Normans as evinced in their application of the Feudal System to English political life in general.

The Feudal System was one of the things the Normans had learnt in France; but their submission to the French tradition did not carry them to the extent of taking it over in its entirety as there practised. The Feudal System contained two opposing principles, a principle of centralization and a principle of disruption; and throughout the whole group of the feudal countries the growth of nationality has been fostered or thwarted in proportion as the first or the second principle has obtained the predominance. In France at this period the disruptive principle was triumphant. Although princes, dukes and counts technically held their territories as the King's men, paying him in return the ceremonial duties of homage and loyalty, yet in most cases the homage and the loyalty were no more sincere than if they had on every occasion been shown as Duke Rollo showed them, by kissing the King's foot in such a rude manner as to throw His Majesty on His Majesty's back. The paramount lord was paramount only in his own immediate territories, or over weak and unwarlike vassals. Political power, the practical attributes of sovereignty, were exercised by his more powerful servants as complete lords of their separate domains. The same attitude was maintained to *their* masters by the vassals of the lords who held directly of the King. Policy, administration, jurisdiction, were split up into a thousand fragmentary and separatist activities, which operated to make the interests

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of the individual subject revolve around his immediate lord, whilst separating him entirely from direct approach to the theoretical fountain of all authority. Although the Norman dukes learnt to pay formal homage with a more delicate courtesy than the first of them, yet they were none the less absolute masters in their own house; which, so far as their relation to the supreme lord is concerned, was, as things were, a matter for no surprise. The wonder is that their mastership was equally complete so far as their own tenants were concerned, immediate, intermediate and subordinate alike. And yet, after all, there is little to wonder at if we suppose that the Norman dukes had some sense of logic, and some strength of character, and some force of material equipment to carry logic to its proper conclusions in practice. The feudal theory was adopted by the Norman dukes as being an excellent theory if only it was consistently put into actual working. According to this theory the Duke of Normandy was the sovereign of Normandy. Certain powers he claimed to exercise over every tenant, no matter at how many removes the land was held. And although this direct authority as exercised by the Dukes of Normandy was nothing like so great and all-embracing as it came to be when developed by the Kings of England, yet it is to their firm grasp upon the importance of centralization as a principle of State power that we largely owe the constitutional form which British nationality exhibits to-day. For when Duke William became King of England it was this part of the feudal theory that he applied with the greatest insight, skill and determination. At once he insisted upon the oath of fealty as a direct bond between himself and every tenant and sub-tenant in the land, and laid down the principle that military service was due, not to any intermediate lord, but to the King alone; that no man was bound to assist his immediate lord in his private quarrels with other lords. The greatest blow directed against the disruptive tendency inherent in the Continental system was the great series of land surveys embodied in Domesday Book, which was a preparatory step to exacting the direct and appropriate oath of loyal service from every tenant, however humble, to the person



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of the King himself. The greatness of this blow can be measured by the length of time which it took to drive it home upon the constantly rebellious feudal barons. But the struggle only had the result of still more firmly establishing the principle, until great feudal lords ceased to disturb the land, either with full-blown rebellions, or private wars decked out with all the solemn paraphernalia of offensive and defensive alliances. The centralization of political and administrative power in the hands of the King meant the establishment of the first of the three great forces which are at once a sign and a cause of a growing sense of nationality—"one King" is the prelude to "one law" and then to "one Parliament."

It will not, of course, be supposed that the tendencies which operate to produce these three great forces act in isolation each from the other; and as we proceed to give a brief account of the rise of a "common law" as a distinctive mark of conscious nationality it will be seen how closely the growth of national law was involved with the growth of a national kingship.

The decentralizing power inherent in the Feudal System was manifested, not only in the military independence claimed by the great tenants, but also in the separate jurisdiction which they maintained within the bounds of their manors. The court-baron and the customary court of the manor, which were tribunals mainly occupied in the settlement of questions of land-tenure and the obligations which they carried with them, gradually came to be essential elements of feudal administration; and even the "hundred" courts, originally courts whose judges were freeholders, had, for the most part, either by royal warrant or in less direct ways, fallen into the hands of the great landowners by the thirteenth century, giving them a certain jurisdiction in criminal matters. The very principles of justice varied in these local courts in accordance with varieties of customary rights. That the methods of their administration wanted uniformity is a clear corollary from the personal authority exercised either by the baron directly or by his servants who presided over the courts. But while this disintegrating principle was in operation for two centuries after the Conquest, it was being happily countered by the

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opposing principle of centralization. This process was conducted in two main directions: by bringing into close contact with the royal authority certain old English courts, which were thus used as a counterbalance to the power of the feudal courts; and by direct and conscious action on the part of the lawyers and statesmen who served the kings toward centralizing the legal administration of the country in a great group of royal courts.

The most striking and typical example of the first process is furnished by the history of the Anglo-Saxon Court of the Shiremoot, the judicial assembly of all the freeholders of the shire. The Norman kings, by not merely allowing, but compelling, not only the highest but the humblest freeholders to attend its meetings on a footing of legal equality, and by strengthening the office of the Sheriff as the royal officer chiefly interested in maintaining the powers and privileges of the King as they existed in the shire, established an anti-feudal, a nationalizing, institution in the very heart and centre of a feudalized community. The English Shiremoot became the Norman County Court; the Sheriff became the Viscount—the vice-comes—the President of the County Court, the Viceroy of the County itself; and fiscal, military and judicial affairs came under his control as representative of the central authority. We can gather something of the extent to which the principle of centralization had triumphed over the principle of local particularism when we observe that only a century after the Conquest the King found himself able to dismiss all the Sheriffs and appoint others, putting lawyers and courtiers in the places of feudal landholders.

But if the assembly of all the freeholders of every county for the administration of that uniform justice in which they had a common interest was thus directly associated with the central power through the Sheriff, a still more fruitful connexion was established by a gradual extension of the jurisdiction of the King's own courts. No institution created by man develops entirely or mainly on unconscious lines—the interpreting and directing power of human intelligence and character is naturally the chief cause in moulding the environ-

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ment to satisfy human ideals. From the time that the Conqueror himself had established the *Curia Regis*, which specialized in the judicial functions of the Anglo-Saxon Witenagemot, leaving its legislative powers to the *Commune Concilium Regni*, or general assembly of great feudal vassals, and had placed the new tribunal under his representative, the *Justiciary*, the *Curia* had formed the nucleus of a great and growing body of skilled lawyers, all interested in increasing its prestige and the scope of its jurisdiction. From that moment onwards we find this court transforming itself from a King's Court to a national court. Gradually it extended its boundaries as a court of final appeal; gradually it took over an increasing amount of the work previously performed by the local courts; gradually it became a court of first instance as well as a court of appeal; and as its principles of jurisprudence and their application were uniform as compared with the variegated judicial practice of the local courts of the shire, the hundred, the manor and the town, there rapidly grew up a body of precedent which was inevitably regarded as national law. This law was expounded in books like that of Ranulf de Glanvill, the justiciary of Henry II. (appointed in 1180), who distinctly states that his "*Treatise on the Laws of England*" deals only with the King's Court, as the variety of custom presented in the local courts was too confusing for description. Meanwhile the Canon law, the law of the Church, administered in ecclesiastical courts upon principles applicable in every district alike, and in many regards affecting all alike, laymen as well as ecclesiastics, had accustomed men's minds to the idea of general or common law; and partly owing to this, and partly to the fact that the King's Court responded to a general demand for remedies elsewhere unobtainable, we learn without surprise that barely a century after the Conquest the King's Court not only decided suits affecting the King and the realm (Court of King's Bench), acted as a final court of appeal (The King in Council), and settled suits concerning the revenue (Court of Exchequer), but also served as a court of first instance for private suits (Court of Common Pleas). It is easy to understand that when Henry II. effected this systematization of the royal



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Courts of Justice he exhibited conspicuously before the eyes of all his subjects the fact that England was one in her law as she was one in her king. The suppression of local variations in legal practice was gradually completed; the courts of the shire and the hundred, as well as the feudal courts, lost their effective judicial powers; the word "justice" becomes a synonym for the law of England and not the law of any particular district as apart from the rest; and, as is well known, Henry drove the point of his reforms home by the appointment of circuit judges, who visited the county courts, revised their judgments or submitted them for revision by the central court at Westminster, where the county had to present itself in the persons of its Knights of the Shire. The famous phrase "*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare,*" with which the barons opposed the application of ecclesiastical law to a particular matter in which their interests were involved, strikingly exhibits the corporate and unified character which the national legal system had assumed in the eyes of the people before the middle of the thirteenth century.

This appeal to the "Laws of England" against those of the Church was made in the year 1236. Sixteen years later a phrase of still wider national application was used by the Countess of Arundel, who reproached King Henry III. for having extorted money from his subjects, and for thus violating "*the liberties of England.*" This incident marks a significant concentration of public opinion in the direction of nationality, inasmuch as neither king nor law has any meaning apart from the people who are loyal to the one and obedient to the other. The King is the symbol of the united people; the law is the safeguard of the united people. There can be no full and clear sense of national unity until it is recognized by the King that the royal power and the laws are not his power and his laws, but the power and the laws of the people. One parliament must follow one king and one law—one parliament in which the common voice of the people shall give expression to the national will on the policy of the King and the administration of the laws. The history of the rise of the English Parliament is well known. We resume it briefly with the object of showing

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the composite nature of the forces which won the victory for the people, and of illustrating the fact that this consummation was due to the operation of circumstances which broke down the hostile interests of the various component elements in the realm and created spheres of common interest to take their place.

We have already seen how the contest for mastery between kings and feudal barons, between the principle of centralization and the principle of disruption, ended in the triumph of the former. But while the fight was proceeding the people as a whole, who took one side or the other according to the pressure of local events and personalities, began to lose their hostility to the Normans as such, and, as they were at first more oppressed by the baronage than by the King, we frequently find them acting with energy and effect on behalf of the latter. Several feudal insurrections were put down by their help, even in the Conqueror's time; and William Rufus could gather them to his standard by appealing to the ancient English contempt of the "nithing." Henry I., who certainly owed his throne to the support of the English, and could always depend for military assistance from the "fyrd" or "*Angliæ exercitus*," cemented the union of king and people by the Charter in which he promised to restore and maintain the "laws of Edward the Confessor," and by his marriage with an English princess who, as the Norman lords sneeringly put it, played the Saxon Godgifu to his Saxon Godric. That Henry was able to disregard the sneer shows the increasing impotence of purely Norman prejudices even in aristocratic social circles. These and similar incidents illustrate the manner in which the hostile spheres of interest of English and Norman, sharply defined as they were at first, were shifting and interchanging and commingling; and we can see emerging, gradually, indeed, but effectively, a general recognition of the fact that Englishmen, as such, whether belonging to the Norman or the Anglo-Saxon tradition, have at least one great common interest—the interest of good government as centred in the King. The feudal and royal anarchy of the reign of Stephen only tended to accentuate and strengthen this feeling, and the most significant

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aspect of the legal and constitutional changes effected by Henry II. lies in the King's recognition that he is governing a united people, that the laws he is making and the courts he is consolidating are the laws and the courts of the English people, and that it is not less for their advantage than for his own that he must govern in accordance with the laws he has recognized. This principle, implicit in the legislative work of Henry II., becomes explicit in the action of the barons in the reign of John; although the real importance of the Great Charter itself is implicit rather than explicit. Explicitly it lays down the principle that the King, if he breaks the law of the land, can be compelled by the barons to amend his ways by a legalized display of force. It has been maintained by a French critic of our history that Magna Carta was in no sense a national document, but was conceived entirely in the interests of the barons themselves; that, to revert to our own phraseology, it gave a legal sanction to the principle of feudal disruption by justifying the right of baronial rebellion. But the same critic has admitted that "false interpretations of some of its articles have not been without influence on the development of English liberties, men having discovered in it, in the course of centuries, all sorts of principles of which its authors had not the least notion."<sup>1</sup> In a word, the barons builded better than they knew. The legal and personal rights of the "*liber homo*" were secured by the Charter when the conception of legal and personal liberty widened with the progress of our national life. The principles which the barons laid down on behalf of their own order were expressed in language which was capable of a wider interpretation as it came to be recognized that other orders had an interest in a strong and just national government. It cannot be claimed that a full national consciousness is expressed in the Great Charter, but the forms of government by the people for the people are already there, soon to be flushed with the new and more comprehensive life which was stirring in the growing and strengthening nation.

<sup>1</sup> *Studies and Notes Supplementary to Stubbs' Constitutional History down to the Great Charter*, by Charles Petit-Dutaillis, translated by W. E. Rhodes, M.A. (Manchester University Press, 1908).



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Although Henry III. was placed upon the throne by foreign rather than by national influence, by the power of the Papal Legate rather than by the power of those English barons who took his part; although the King himself was more French than English in his tastes and predilections; yet it is in his reign that we have the rise of that national movement which gives us the English Parliament as the organ and expression of a strong national sentiment. Henry's policy allowed England to become the happy hunting-ground of every Savoyard and Poitevin and Provençal who saw in the favour of Henry's Provençal Queen opportunities for personal aggrandisement. By a touch of historical irony, one of these foreigners was Simon de Montfort, to whose action in purely English politics it was largely due that the old feudal ideas of separate local independence were finally overthrown, and even the sole right of barons and prelates to advise the King in matters affecting the Commonweal was destroyed by the admission to the common Council of the Realm of that element represented by the burghers and the Knights of the Shire. This element of popular representation was not permanently established by De Montfort's Parliament of 1265, but when De Montfort's "rival and pupil," the "English Justinian," Edward I., came to carry on the work of administrative concentration, he found that he could most firmly establish the central power by building up a national consultative assembly in which the people should find itself represented as fully as was then thought possible, and we see the fruition of De Montfort's earlier labours in the so-called "Model Parliament" of 1295. "What touches all," said the King, "should be approved by all; common dangers should be met by remedies agreed upon in common. The King of France has beset my realm with a great fleet and a great multitude of warriors, and proposes to blot out the English tongue from the face of the earth." There at last we have a full and authoritative expression of that conscious sentiment of nationality which presents a whole community, formed out of many warring elements, as united in a single effort of internal administration and foreign action.

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But while the consolidation of the nationalistic sentiment was being effected as against the spirit of feudal disruption, it was, at the same time, no less persistently asserted as against the cosmopolitan ideals of ecclesiasticism. It was Gregory VII. who, as Subdeacon Hildebrand, had blessed the Norman standard which was victorious at Hastings; and the titanic struggle between the Hildebrandine Papacy and the secular "Holy" Roman Empire of Henry IV. was felt by England in many direct and indirect results. The exemption of ecclesiastics from civil jurisdiction, unknown in the primitive ages of the Church, except so far as, in accordance with Apostolic precept, its members settled their differences amongst themselves, arose gradually and almost accidentally, and was not fully established even so late as the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> But from that time the practice spread rapidly throughout Western Christendom; and the spiritual courts, by the regularity of their procedure and the full opportunities allowed for the revision of judgments step by step until, if necessary, they reached the Pope himself, presented an impressive picture of established judicial procedure, securing that fairness in the settlement of disputes which seems so desirable to men who have been long harassed by the strong hand of arbitrary tyranny. It was in these courts, established in every part of Papal Christendom, that the ecclesiastical authorities found the machinery for carrying out their ideal of a universal state, of which secular kings and emperors should be the vassals and instruments.

We have already described the condition of practical

<sup>1</sup> "On the establishment of Christianity the practice obtained legislative sanction, Constantine giving the bishop's court concurrent jurisdiction with the ordinary civil courts where both parties preferred the former, and by a later enactment going so far as to empower one of the parties to a suit to remove it to the ecclesiastical tribunal against the will of the other.—Honorius judged it expedient to revert to the original rule, and, at least as regarded laymen, to limit the right of resort to the episcopal judicatory to cases in which both parties consented."—The clerical judge, however, had no criminal jurisdiction, and, even in a civil case, his finding, if not voluntarily implemented, has to be rendered operative by the aid of the civil magistrate.—*Historical Introduction to the Private Law of Rome*, by James Muirhead, LL.D. (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1886), p. 434.

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independence which the English Church, so far as the Papacy was concerned, had enjoyed before the Conquest. That event, however, brought it into the full circle of Continental ecclesiasticism, and the Conqueror's early substitution of English abbots by cosmopolitan Church dignitaries from Bec and Caen and Lombardy and Lorraine soon flooded the English Church with minds fully instructed in the principles of ecclesiastical jurisprudence. Little inconvenience was felt in the reign of the Conqueror, who, aided by the English ecclesiastical tradition of independence and by the Anglo-Saxon union of Church and State, fostered the Church as subordinate to the Crown, exacting feudal homage from the bishops, but himself repudiating the claim of Pope Gregory VII. to exact it from him, although he sowed the seeds of much future mischief by allowing the creation of separate ecclesiastical courts in the country. For a century and a half after the Conquest the kings adhered to their claim to appoint archbishops, bishops and abbots, whose positions as barons in the secular feudal hierarchy made it important that they should be in harmony with the political views of the central authority. Both Henry I. and Henry II. had been strict in asserting this necessary instrument of royal policy, and the latter had even been able, notwithstanding the bitter opposition of Becket, to inflict a set-back upon clerical freedom from civil jurisdiction. But the dream of an Imperial Church fatally obsessed the minds of the Popes and their supporters. About the beginning of the twelfth century a copy of the *Digest* or *Pandects* of Justinian, prepared as a compendious exposition of what was most valuable in Roman jurisprudence, appears to have been found at Pisa. This account of the principles of Roman law, richer in material, clearer and more logical in form, than any previously accessible, and issued as it had been by a Christian emperor as a Perpetual Edict, was welcomed by the Roman Church as an additional instrument in the perfection of her universal organization, and ecclesiastically-minded lawyers lectured on the new legal manual in every university and city of Western Europe, starting at Bologna from the school of Irnerius into whose hands the new MS. had found



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its way.<sup>1</sup> The Vicar of Christ as feudal lord of the world, whose sway was buttressed by a detailed and definite system of law universal in its application—this, indeed, was the very apotheosis of the principle of centralization; but grandiose as the ideal was, and logically based upon an extension of those very principles which had led to the establishment of the separate kingdoms and states of Europe, it presented features which brought it into opposition to the rising forces of nationality, with the result that, not only on the Continent, but in England also, the national tradition refused to submit to the universal Church. But the force of the ecclesiastical conception, embodied in one of the most perfectly organized institutions the world has ever known, was sufficient to bring weak kings like John and Henry III. to the feet of the Church. John surrendered his kingdom to Pope Innocent III. and received it back as the Pope's feudal vassal. Even Magna Carta conceded the right of free election to cathedral chapters and religious houses, and inferentially made every election subject to the approval of the Pope, who also claimed and exercised from this time onward an absolute power over nominations to many English benefices. This power enabled Gregory IX. to extract large sums from England to support him in his final conflict with the Emperor Frederick II., and these exactions, coupled with the fact that so many foreign incumbents had been imposed on English parishes, where they were paid for services which they could not perform, accentuated the rising national exasperation against the foreigner, whether here for social profit or ecclesiastical preferment, gave greater driving power to the movement which created the Parliaments of 1265 and 1295, and enabled Edward I. to obtain full national sanction for the great series of enactments in which he established both the spiritual and political independence of England against the Papacy and its claim to universal dominion. As on the purely political side of nationality there were set-backs and retrogressions, so also on the purely ecclesiastical side there were to be vicissitudes, until the Tudor monarchs completed the work of the

<sup>1</sup> Muirhead's *Private Law of Rome*, p. 434.

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First Edward by centralizing ecclesiastical as well as political authority in the head of the State. The spheres of spiritual power and political action were amalgamated to form constituent elements in the wider sphere of national life.

From this point onward historians of England, however much their narrative may be coloured by sympathy with this or that protagonist in the struggle, can only record facts which, more or less effectively, only describe persons who, more or less willingly, contributed their share to that final consummation of British political life which substitutes symbolic kingship for personal kingship. The nineteenth century realization of the ideal of the King as the symbol of a united people, representing their conscience, their hopes and their collective purpose, is the final triumph of the principle of centralization which was the permanent Norman contribution to the influences that have made for national development. The Normans also contributed another influence—the tendency to disruption and disintegration; but, aided by the special circumstances which moulded the character of English kings and English people on English soil, they placed the former principle on so sound a basis that after the thirteenth century it was never eliminated from our English national life. The conflict between the two was not yet over; but as the Tudor and Stuart love of personal monarchy was in reality a return to the disruptive principle, inasmuch as it claimed powers for the King apart from the will of the people, and tended to set up again two fundamentally interhostile elements in the State, it can be no matter for surprise that the old tradition of unity finally re-asserted itself over the individualism of the kings. But when the monarchy survived the execution of one royal personage and the expulsion of another, it was clearly evident that the principle of royalty existed independently of persons, and had its essential value and meaning in symbolizing and representing the united people of the nation. From 1688 onwards the whole tendency of our political development has been in the direction of still further strengthening the Crown as against the person of the King, by making the Crown

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the symbol of a united nation and at last of a united Empire. The Crown, as we have seen, however, is not the only symbol of our national unity; and whether it can long remain practically the only symbol of our Imperial unity is a question which does not concern us here, except to suggest that some hints towards a solution of the question, when it becomes urgent, as it is rapidly becoming urgent, may be found in the precedents of our national history.

If we were able to detail at length the steps which led to the incorporation of Wales, Scotland and Ireland in the United Kingdom, the story would but illustrate more fully the fact that the growth of common nationality is no question of the mixing of the blood of different races, but only a question of an historical process by which competing and mutually hostile spheres of interest are diminished or disappear in the wider spheres of common interest. The fact that internecine wars were long carried on between the various parts of the now united kingdom indicates the hostility of the separate spheres of interest towards each other; the union of these parts in one single constitutional system is an intimation of the growth of a sphere of common interests, common sentiments and common hopes. Just so far as the pressure of circumstances and the conscious actions of men have tended to produce a strong sense of common interest, just to that extent is the sense of common nationality strongly and securely based; as in the cases of Wales and Scotland. Just so far as the pressure of circumstances and the conscious action of men have failed to produce a strong sense of common interest, just to that extent has the sense of common nationality been weak and halting, as at most periods in the history of Ireland. The case of Scotland is particularly interesting as showing how much practical unity can exist side by side with considerable diversity of national customs and national character. Indeed, it is one of the happy paradoxes of British nationality that the strongest sense of unity is nurtured upon local freedom in matters which do not directly concern the spheres of national politics.

In the case of the Colonies, the feeling of common



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interest has existed from the first, as the oversea settlers necessarily carried with them the national tradition in which they had been born and reared. Even when the emigration was due to a desire to escape tyrannical infringements of personal or social freedom, the refugees took with them that very principle of liberty which they regarded as the birthright of Englishmen; the sacred necessity of that principle for their political and spiritual growth was, indeed, the very cause of their leaving the country where they had learned it, but could not enjoy it so much as they wished. That native and familiar growth of the soil of England, the popular Assembly, bore transplanting so well that it soon became native and familiar in every quarter of the globe. "It was the nature of Englishmen to assemble," says Seeley. "Thus the old historian of the Colonies, Hutchinson, writes under the year 1619, 'This year a House of Burgesses *broke out* in Virginia.'"<sup>1</sup> Colonial legislature and administration, whatever developments they might assume in order to meet local needs, were necessarily inspired by the principles of English constitutional progress and guided by the precedents of English law. Religion, moreover, still united them in sympathetic, if distant, communion with congregations they had left at home; and although the influence of a common language in harmonizing adverse interests has been unduly exaggerated, yet we cannot deny to the educated Colonist a sense of community with all the countrymen of Shakespeare and Milton, nor to the remainder a feeling of spiritual unity with all those who read the English Bible. The bases of the British Empire abroad are undoubtedly fixed in the English national tradition, which has been strong enough to endure even when the policy of England herself did nothing to encourage, and something to thwart, its permanence. The British Empire is, indeed, the "Expansion of England," as Seeley so happily expressed it, and the remotest settlements of her people are connected with her by that continuity of tradition which, as we have shown by parallel cases at home, becomes all the stronger and richer for the intermingling with it of the special

<sup>1</sup> *The Expansion of England*, p. 67 (Macmillan, 1883).

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elements of the new environment. The growth of the British Empire, like that of Great Britain herself, is an example of that continuous process by which the feeling of organic community has been associated with local patriotism in the creation of a loyalty at once generously Imperial and strongly particularistic. The Empire is still what the Merchant Adventurers of England were in the sixteenth century—"the English nation beyond the sea."<sup>1</sup> The principle whose operation brought union among warring English states has had a vigorous application in the evolution of the British Colonial system, in which we have seen colonies peopled by different races forming Unions and Confederations within the still greater Union and Confederation of the Empire itself. When we remember that the most permanent and the strongest element in the English political tradition is the principle of self-government, it ceases to be a paradox that the extension of self-government in our Colonial Empire should be the most efficient cause in binding the Empire and England into indissoluble union. And it is a perfectly natural extension of the same principle that Colonies which have governed themselves as parts of the Empire should demand a share in the government of the Empire of which they are parts; as representatives of the English political tradition they can do nothing less. The principle which gave Barbadoes self-government at the outset is the identical principle which in the natural order of development created the Imperial Conference and, aided by the accentuation of Imperial unity owing to the common danger of the war, has given us the Imperial War Cabinet. The progress of the war and the growth of Imperial unity will, no doubt, lead to a gradual extension of the powers of the Colonial representatives in the Cabinet, and it is easy to foretell that the settlement to come after the war will be the work, not only of English politicians, but of Imperial statesmen in the widest sense.<sup>2</sup> Finally, one may surely prophesy

<sup>1</sup> *The British Empire*, Six Lectures by Sir Charles Lucas, K.C.B., K.C.M.G. (Macmillan, 1915), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> This, of course, was written before the end of the war. The broader Colonial and Indian representation at the Peace Conference has still further illustrated the point.

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without rashness that the Empire will enjoy self-government as an Empire as well as in its individual elements, with a system of Imperial taxation for Imperial purposes, taxation not voted by the British Parliament, but by an Imperial Assembly. A fully Imperial Constitution will inevitably follow; and just as the principle of organic continuity of common interest has been the foundation of nationality in the local sense, so it will attain a splendid culmination in the formation of an Imperial nationality in which all the various interests of the separate elements will be harmonized and embodied. Again, we find that organic continuity of common interest is the basis of nationality, of nationality Imperial as well as local. The American Colonies were lost to the British Empire owing to an apparent and temporary divergence of interest which was accentuated by the folly of English politicians into a permanent separation; but it is an interesting and not entirely academic question how far the participation of the United States in the war on the side of the Allies was due, not only to the sense of a common interest in the settlement of immediately pressing questions, but to the endurance of that English tradition of freedom in which the foundations of American nationality were laid.

So far as the Dependencies are concerned our administration has been more or less successful, according to the degree in which, after a period of the imposition of the strong hand of conquest, it has convinced the natives that their own special interests can be best safeguarded by their acquiescence in a condition of government which brings them into the sphere of interests common to the Empire as a whole. In India the methods of our administration have actually created that sense of national unity which we are now endeavouring to satisfy in such a manner as to convince the native populations that their interests are indissolubly bound up with our own.

That the Empire, notwithstanding the infinite variety of the racial elements which compose it and the different types of national character which it exhibits, has been enduringly built upon the solid ground of common interests, common dangers and common hopes, is proved



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by "the old English fortitude and love of freedom" displayed by those who, having founded an Empire, have cemented it enduringly by the ultimate consecration of death in defence of its common ideals.

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*Note.*—The writer has adhered to the use of the term "Empire" as most expressive of the grandeur of the conception, as well as most in harmony with even democratic precedent, notwithstanding the criticism that has recently been directed against it from democratic quarters. Admitting that the word "imperium" originally meant the military power conferred upon a Roman magistrate, and that in the time of Appian (A.D. 125) the military title of Imperator was never conferred upon a general unless 10,000 of the enemy had been slain (*De Bello Civili*, II. 455), we may yet ask what would become of our composite English speech if we were forbidden to use words except in the meaning they had in the language from which we received them. Besides, that the term "Commonwealth," preferred by some, is not devoid of similar bloodthirsty associations the pages of Livy, Guicciardini and Motley bear witness. Even under our own "Commonwealth" more than half the national revenue was spent upon the Navy! But these objections would not tell against the word "Commonwealth" any more than they do against the word "Empire." The fact is that these two words denote quite different conceptions in our recognized and familiar speech, and have done so for centuries. For an early use of the term "Empire" we can refer to the famous Statute of Henry VIII. decreeing that "this Realm of England is an Empire." This Act was one of the weapons welded by the Tudors in the final stages of the long struggle waged by English nationality against ecclesiastical Universalism, and was specially directed against the payment of dues to the See of Rome. Its assertion of the Imperial character of the English Realm was in reality a Declaration of Independence, meaning, as Blackstone said, that "our King is equally sovereign and independent within these his dominions

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as any Emperor is in his Empire." <sup>1</sup>—Milton and Burke supply still more democratic examples. Witness, among others, the great passage in the *Reformation in England*: "O Thou that, after the impetuous rage of five bloody inundations and the succeeding sword of intestine war . . . didst build up this Brittanic Empire to a glorious and enviable height, with all her daughter islands about her, stay us in this felicity," etc. And elsewhere, in allusion to Cromwell (although in this case he does it in Latin), he says: "The whole surface of the British Empire has been the witness of his exploits." <sup>2</sup> If Milton, the Republican, who knows, moreover, the noble uses of the word "Commonwealth," can admirably describe "England and her daughter islands" as an Empire, we less vigorous democrats need surely feel only pride in applying the great name to an infinitely more magnificent creation. Burke is equally emphatic. In his truly democratic defence of the action of America (Speech on American Taxation, April 19, 1774), he says: "The Parliament of Great Britain sits at the head of her extensive Empire in two capacities: one as the local legislature of this island; the other, and I think her nobler capacity, is what I call her *Imperial character*," etc. Elsewhere in the same speech he uses the word, clearly without any militaristic suggestion: "By such management, by the irresistible operation of feeble counsels, so paltry a sum as Threepence in the eyes of a financier, so insignificant an article as Tea in the eyes of a philosopher, have shaken the pillars of a *Commercial Empire* that circled the whole globe."

<sup>1</sup> Lucas, *The British Empire*. Intro: p. 3, "Empire denoted the spiritual and temporal independence of England."

<sup>2</sup> "Defensio secunda pro populo Anglicano."

## CHAPTER XI

Social and economic Aspects of the Development of English Nationality since the Conquest—The Effects of Alien Immigration on (1) the Expansion of Trade and Commerce, (2) the Rise and Growth of Towns, (3) the Substitution of the Cash-nexus for natural Exchange—The Breaking-up of Feudalism as an economic Structure in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries—Alien Immigration since that Period: its Influence upon modern commercial and political Institutions—The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the Huguenot Immigration—The progressive Amalgamation of Aliens with the native Population: their Acceptance of the English national Tradition—The Naturalization of Aliens—The Necessity for systematic Education in Patriotism.

Not by commingling of blood, therefore, but by the amalgamation of different traditional cultures was the political union of the British Empire effected. We have attained our present organized participation in the hegemony of the world, not by the blind impulsion of racial forces, inevitably destined to mastery over other peoples not so favourably equipped with the biological apparatus of universal dominion, but by the play and interplay of the natural human mind and the forces which surrounded it on British soil. The consequent growth of national consciousness has involved the formation of a national conscience which has brought nature and circumstance more and more constantly under the direction of the moral intelligence of the community; and the nation has thus attained such a degree of moral culture that it no more obeys the crude and ferocious dictates of physical biology in the national and international spheres than does the educated individual citizen in his personal and social life. The course of our national development has so run, or has been so guided, that the national brain and the national conscience—themselves, of course, ultimately a product of biological evolution—have been enabled, with some effect, if not so completely as in the sphere of personal



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conduct, to check the savage and selfish impulses of the forces to which they owe their birth.

And this progress of political development has been accompanied by social development on similar lines. Everywhere we perceive new social conditions issuing from the intermingling of communal environments originally distinct from each other, often hostile to each other. A good many of our "characteristically English" institutions, so far from being the product of specialized "racial" powers, are due, directly or indirectly, to the importation of alien elements and their incorporation into the social organism of the nation. To develop at any length the story of our social culture in this direction is manifestly one of those many tempting tasks which the writer, in proportion with his general scheme, must decline; but he must run the risk of too great copiousness of illustration at least to the extent of showing broadly how inextricably interwoven with the social and industrial progress of Britain has been the incessant introduction of new alien materials into the national fabric. Dr. Cunningham, whose book on *Alien Immigrants to England* makes it possible for the first time to take a general conspectus of the whole of the evidence in a concise and connected story, frankly jettisons the racial hypothesis in the practical elucidation of his subject;<sup>1</sup> although he pays lip-service to it in a manner which is all the more interesting and significant from its very hesitation. "There are," he says, "natural aptitudes and dispositions,—like the love of the sea,—or formed habits of frugality and industry, which *may, perhaps*, be transmitted as the races mingle.—The readiness with which Englishmen adapt themselves to the conditions of life in all parts of the world *may possibly* be connected with the curious admixture in the stock from which they have sprung. But these effects are not easy to trace definitely; it is hard to establish any conclusive proof which shall enable us to derive this or that national quality from any special strain of alien blood. Such speculations may interest the anthropologist, but they

<sup>1</sup> *Alien Immigrants to England*, by W. Cunningham, D.D. (Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1897. "Social England" Series.)

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hardly fall within the province of the historian." And he adds : " There is some reason to believe that the whole civilization of the globe is one; the marked steps in invention and discovery have been taken once for all, and then have been followed in one region after another. —The principal method by which the culture, thus gradually attained, has been diffused over the globe has been by migration." <sup>1</sup> The first portion of this passage does not take into consideration the fact that maritime tribes lose their love and mastery of the sea when the environment has not kept these qualities in play—as we have seen was the case with the Normans, and the inland English in Alfred's time; or the fact that the quality of adaptiveness to varieties of physical and social conditions, claimed as due to the mixed racial origin of the British, has also been imputed to the particular racial qualifications of the " purer " Norman stock. The latter part of the quotation, however, corroborates the view adopted by the writer in Chapter II. of this book, that all races are equipped by Nature with capacities equally receptive to all the processes of civilization, and that their cultural progress depends upon the extension of their environment to include streams of inspiration flowing from alien sources. And upon this foundation Dr. Cunningham proceeds to construct one of the most pleasing and effective works ever elaborated on a sociological question, especially in the sphere of Industrial Economics, and the writer gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to so able an historian for many facts and illustrations whose absence would render this chapter halting and incomplete. With the purely literary aspect of our social development, if there can be a purely literary aspect of such a matter, it is proposed to deal at a subsequent stage.

Those who imagine that the composition of the English people was practically settled at the Norman Conquest will be surprised at the never-ceasing effect which has been produced upon our social and industrial life by the introduction of alien elements subsequent to that event. During the first century of the Norman régime hosts of foreign mercenaries, especially Flemings, who came here to take part in the royal and baronial

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Cunningham, *Alien Immigrants*, Intro., pp. 7-8.

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wars—notoriously in the reign of Stephen—settled down as subordinate cultivators of the soil and as masons employed in the construction of military works, commingling with the lower strata of the English population, teaching them their ways and being taught in return. The elusiveness of race as a factor in the development of a national patriotism is illustrated by the fact that the *Flemish* settlement made in Pembrokeshire by Henry I. was known by the title of “*Little England*,” and the warlike energy of these people not only checked the insurrections of Wales against the English kings, but their knowledge of agriculture and manufactures helped more thoroughly to anglicize that part of the country than their military effectiveness. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the fact that the descendants of a large body of Flemish settlers whom Henry II. drove out of England to the banks of the Clyde became a constituent element of the Scottish people and shared its national fortunes. Incidentally we may observe that the same aspect of the questions of race and environment in their relationship to nationality is emphasized when we remember the part played by great Norman families who emigrated from England to Scotland at this period. The southern part of the kingdom of Scotland was practically English in speech and civilization, the Welsh of Strathclyde and the Picts of Fife having been gradually assimilated by the English Northumbrians of the Lothians, who had settled there in the sixth century. Celtic culture, such as it was, still prevailed in the Highlands, and both traditions showed themselves capable of influencing the character and outlook of the Normans whom they received into their midst. The Stuarts, the Balliols, the Cummings, the Bruces and the Wallaces, and many other famous Norman families, contributed their share to mould Scottish nationality as independent of English; while others, like the Gordons and Frasers, became pure chiefs of Gaelic clans and lost all ostensible trace of either Norman or English traditions. These and their descendants were Scottish of the Scots, just as the Geraldines and the Desmonds, the Arundels and the Carews, the Condons and the Courcies, the Barretts and



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the Savages, disappeared as Normans in Ireland, to be merged in the native population and, in defiance of their "splendid race," to become *ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores*.

Into England herself, meanwhile, the flood of alien merchants and artizans had continued to pour. Before the end of the twelfth century fullers and weavers from abroad were centred in various towns, and although they were long organized in separate communities, a knowledge of human nature prevents us from supposing that they lived in entire social isolation from the native inhabitants of the same neighbourhoods. The intermingling of French and English in towns, castles and cities, their intermarriages and their common commercial activities, are noted by Ordericus Vitalis as a feature of social life in the early part of the twelfth century, and are brought into evidence by many a borough Survey of that period. This mixing together of the once alien elements of English and Norman would tend to break down the barriers between Normans and English on the one hand, and alien immigrants to their common country on the other. The great monastic corporations of the Benedictines and Cistercians, each with a strong international organization, introduced foreign workmen, both lay and clerical, of various arts and capacities, some of whom imprinted characteristics of Norman ecclesiastical architecture upon the dwellings of the common people. The economic conditions springing out of the national industry of the manorial system of agriculture made the households of the great feudal magnates, the bishops and the barons, travelling caravanserais of social influence, radiating new kinds of foreign manners and foreign workmanship in the neighbourhoods of their various residences.

The development of trading, which was encouraged by the Continental relationships of the feudal barons and ecclesiastics, and by the failure of the industrial system of the country to supply the demands of a cultivated and powerful aristocracy, is equally involved with the spread of alien influences. Bills of Exchange and Letters of Credit were adopted from the practice of foreign merchants engaged in the pursuit of their calling in this country. The method of weighing by

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avoidupois was a system thought to have been adopted from the Moors and Arabs by Spanish merchants, who, at any rate, introduced it into England. "It is interesting to note," says Dr. Cunningham, "that the complications which distinguish our country from those which have adopted the decimal system are chiefly due to the fact that we have adhered to various competing systems which were originally introduced from abroad"; and he states elsewhere that "the foundations of our fiscal and administrative system had been already laid by aliens; and, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they did not a little to prepare for our coming industrial greatness."<sup>1</sup> Jews—never allowed at that time to become English, as they are now—Lombards, Flemings and Florentines played the part of bankers to English kings and English people. The influence which, in this capacity, they brought to bear upon the settlement of English constitutional questions may be judged from the fact that even so English a king as Edward III. dispensed with the financial assistance of Parliament by means of loans from alien merchants, a precedent not unfollowed in several later political crises.

It is interesting to observe that the native jealousy of the foreigner, always latent, at any rate, if not always exhibited, and never eliminated even under the competing stimulus of religious and political sympathy, was in the fourteenth century the very means by which the social relationships of the English and their foreign mercantile visitors were more closely interwoven. The civic authorities of London at that time objected to the Gascon merchants living in separate households of their own, and in the London Charter of 1327 it was expressly stipulated that every foreign merchant should be domiciled with an English host. The ordinary results of daily domestic contiguity no doubt operated to dissolve the jealousy which had insisted upon the arrangement. This practice still existed in the fifteenth century, and was by no means restricted to London, where, however, it was not universally applied, Genoese and Hanse merchants being exempted from its operation.

This exemption probably points to the strong position

<sup>1</sup> *Alien Immigrants*, pp. 62, 68.

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held in the city by these merchants, owing to their numbers and financial importance. The Genoese, at any rate, exercised a far-reaching influence upon our commercial and general life, and, at the same time, Venetian galleys were pouring all the luxurious wealth of the East into England, where its effect upon the manners and habits of the people was noted by a contemporary satirist, who inveighs against "the great galleys of Venice and Florence," all laden with—

"Apes and japes and marmoisettes be-tailed,  
Trifles, trifles that little have availed :  
And things with which they featly blear our eye  
With thingès not enduring that we buy." <sup>1</sup>

Italian silks and silversmiths' work were in great demand in England. In 1409 there was so much Venetian coinage in circulation in London that an Act of Parliament prohibited its use. Even the bows which helped to win our victory at Agincourt ("the bow that was made in England," as the popular patriotic song has it) were landed at Southampton from Venetian galleys. While Italy gave us these things—and much else, as we shall recall in a following chapter—we gave her what she wanted, *condottieri* like Cook and Hawkwood—Hawkwood, who was actually buried in the Cathedral at Florence.

The effect which all this foreign intercourse had in stimulating the competition of English merchants and introducing new methods of production and distribution cannot be measured, but it cannot be estimated too highly. The industrial policy of Edward III., who "may be said to have taken the first steps to render this country the workshop of the world," encouraged foreigners, and particularly Flemish weavers, to settle in every part of the country, where they "mingled with the rest of the community, and planted the skill which they themselves possessed." <sup>2</sup> If the Flemings are properly credited with being the pioneers of capitalistic production in England, their influence for good or ill has permeated every part of our industrial and social system.

<sup>1</sup> "Libelle of Englyshe Polyeeye," in *Political Songs* ("Rolls" Series), II. 73 (Dr. Cunningham, p. 96).

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, pp. 101, 105.



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The most direct sphere of the operation of these alien commercial influences was, of course, the towns, in which the immigrants congregated to carry on the business of exchange. Although the town was, in a certain sense, an offshoot of the Feudal System, yet the influences which developed the borough in mediæval times were derived from many other sources. As we have already seen, there is very little connexion by historical continuity between the *municipium* of Roman Britain and the modern town or city, whatever may have been the case with the towns of European countries more fully Romanized than was the case with Britain. The Saxons left most of the Roman towns severely alone, and their once vigorous life sank into desolation and neglect; although their walls, crumbling with the accumulated débris of six centuries, were still capable of restoration and fortification as a means of concentrated defence against the Danes. Nor did the Saxon township itself, even when separated from the rest of the village community and endowed with a hundred court of its own, contain many hints of the future greatness of the English boroughs and cities. Centres of considerable population certainly arose in Anglo-Saxon times, either as emporiums for a special local trade, or as settlements round a castle or abbey, or as markets of spontaneous growth at convenient positions for the exchange of natural commodities in general. But even so, the town was a mere territorial appanage of some great manorial lord, some caldorman or thegn. And this position of affairs was crystallized by the feudalism of the Norman Conquest—crystallized at least in theory, inasmuch as while the English towns were thus ostensibly brought to the same state of feudal dependence as the Continental towns had been, the same principle of detachment which had already commenced to free the towns of Italy and France and Spain from feudal domination began to operate also in England with the introduction of the Feudal System. The evil suggested and compelled its own remedy, although in this case, too, the remedy was adopted under the influence of foreign examples. It was the rise of commerce in Italy that enabled civil communities—which

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there, perhaps, had never lost all traces of Roman municipal organization—to grow so strong in population and in wealth that they were powerful enough to ask, and rich enough to buy, immunities from the feudal burdens which had hitherto been imposed upon them by the German emperors and their tenants-in-chief. Before the Norman conquest of England the practice had extended to France, where Louis VI. first conferred “Charters of Community,” which freed the towns from feudal claims, allowing them to defend themselves with their own arms and elect their own councils and municipal magistrates. By the thirteenth century most of the towns in France were free corporations, which had bought their liberties with a price paid to crusading barons and knights in want of money to equip their sanctified military expeditions. The same national check to the feudal spirit was in operation in England almost immediately after the Conquest. The numerous castles built for purposes of military repression could not always be situated upon estates capable of satisfying all the necessities of the lord of the manor and his household; and to create a market was to secure the permanent residence of a body of traders whose corporate consciousness was developed by their common protection from feudal exactions in return for their common commercial usefulness. The creation of a close spirit of co-operation and community of interest gives a new character to these anti-feudal offshoots of the Feudal System, and they are soon able to demand, and (at a price) obtain, concessions from the feudal magnate after the manner of the burghers of Continental towns; and all remnants of feudal servitude finally dropped through natural decay or were commuted for money payments. “During the lapse of two hundred years after the Conquest, the citizens and burgesses were enabled to extort, from the pecuniary necessities of the kings, charters of liberties varying greatly in extent, but all conceding more or less of self-government through the medium of elected and representative magistrates.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *English Constitutional History*, by Thomas Pitt Taswell-Langmead, B.C.L. (Stevens & Haynes, 1886), p. 237. See also Sir Stanley Leathes, pp. 215-17.

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That the presence and the activities of the foreign merchants settled in the various towns operated to strengthen and extend the influence of the citizens as against the barons is a natural conclusion from the facts already enumerated, and from the fact that nearly all the foreign trade of the country and nearly all the capital were in their hands. But the power and importance of the towns were further increased by the rise of the merchant-guilds, whose great development in England at this time is doubtless due to the inspiration and example of the foreign merchants, although here, too, there is a question whether the institution itself cannot be traced to English origins. Perhaps there is something like general agreement in the view that the *ceapmannes-gild*—the chapman's guild, the merchant's union—furnished a native hint which was subsequently expanded and strengthened by alien influence. Even before the Conquest the merchant-guild was tending to monopolize the civic administration—to become, in fact, the governing body of the town—a process which was more fully established after the Conquest. "In the reign of Henry II.," says Stubbs, "there can be little doubt that the possession of a merchant-guild had become the sign and token of municipal independence. It is recognized by Glanvill as identical with the *Communa* of the privileged towns, the municipal corporation of the later age."<sup>1</sup> If the trade-guild became finally identified with the *Communa*, we have indubitable evidence of foreign influence in securing the amalgamation. The foreign form of the association—which is thought, with some reason, to trace backward to the Roman "collegia" of merchants—included the whole of the burgesses in a "Commune," all of them being bound by an oath to co-operate on certain agreed lines for the welfare of the town. The town of Rouen, for example, was administered in this way, under "un Maire, douze échevins, douze conseillers, et soixante-quinze pairs," and it was upon this analogy that, so early as the reign of Richard I., the sworn "Commune" was established in London, with a mayor and an aldermanic council of twenty-four.

<sup>1</sup> Stubbs, *Constitutional History*, Vol. I. p. 418.



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Apart from the merchant-guild as governing body of the whole borough, there were numerous guilds for particular trades, which were adopted here under the influence of Flemish weavers who had long been familiar with them on the Continent. There was, indeed, friction between the borough-communes and the separate trade-guilds, probably due to the foreign element in the private associations, whose interests were not yet felt as fully identical with those of the town in which they resided; but individual foreigners were frequently admitted into the borough-guilds. Early in the twelfth century Coventry obtained the power to elect outsiders as "combургenses," and many towns which possessed a merchant-guild elected aliens to share their mercantile rights, with the natural result that they and their families became settled and loyal members of the civic community.

But whatever may have been the effect of the foreign elements upon the English mercantile movement, there can be no doubt that the mercantile movement as a whole ended in the creation of a class of society which, separated as its civic components were by local situation, was united in a common sphere of interest born of common occupations and a common outlook upon the practical issues of their life. As Guizot remarks in the parallel case of the French towns: "Notwithstanding that all remained local, a new and general class was created by the enfranchisement. No coalition had existed between the citizens; they had as a class no common and public existence. But the country was filled with men in the same situation, having the same interests and the same manners, between whom a certain bond and unity could not fail of being gradually established, which should give rise to the *bourgeoisie*. The formation of a great social class, the *bourgeoisie*, was the necessary result of the local enfranchisement of the burghers."<sup>1</sup> In England the corresponding class which was then formed has, by its early and continuous representation in Parliament, been enabled, although not in every case entirely subordinating its

<sup>1</sup> Guizot, *History of Civilization*, translated by W. Hazlitt (D. Bogue, 1846. The "Bohn" Series), Vol. I. p. 137.

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interests as a class to those of the nation at large, to play a great part in the development of a national patriotism. The history of its rise and progress forcibly illustrates the process by which newer spheres of common interest are formed out of a blended variety of diverse and partial interests, themselves in turn to blend with other spheres of interest in a more generous and comprehensive atmosphere.

But no account of foreign influences upon society in England would be complete, even as a general sketch, which failed to note the effect which the growth of commercial industrialism, stimulated as it was from alien sources, had upon the manorial system of industry, which had been systematically feudalized by the organizing skill of the Norman lawyers.

The village community was, as we have already seen, a perfectly natural and spontaneous growth of social co-operation to meet the needs of primitive peoples dependent upon agricultural and pastoral produce; but in the form of the manor, which it had assumed in England even before the Norman Conquest, the Norman jurists, especially when they, too, responded to the highly systematized influence of Roman law, had endeavoured to crystallize it into a hard-and-fast scheme of precedent and practice, and thus to stereotype the naturally pliant form of social evolution. These conscious efforts at crystallization are nearly always the sign of imminent decadence, being probably due to a recognition of the fact that the institution to which they are applied no longer corresponds to the general requirements of the community, though satisfactory enough to a particular class. As population increased, both by the growth of the native inhabitants and by the immigration of foreigners, social groups arose for whom there could eventually be found no place in the manorial system. Craftsmen and artisans increased, who could not all be employed either by the lord or his tenants. Moreover, the method of open-field cultivation, which was of the very essence of the village community with its historic conception of the supremacy of the whole body of its cultivators over any of its individual members, opposed an inconvenient and old-

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fashioned barrier to the development of agriculture by improved and enlightened efforts. The sacred phrase "*cum consuetudinibus villae*"—"in accordance with the customs of the manor"—was no less an incubus upon progress than a guarantee of social justice. And again, questions of practical convenience early began to render the system of payment in kind obsolete as a means of exchange. Bread made on the feudal lord's provincial manor was not always in excellent condition for the lord's consumption at his palace in Westminster, and it was much more convenient to have a supply of ready money to buy new bread at the nearest market. There was occasional resort to the expedient of exchanging manors at a distance for others nearer to where they were wanted; an arrangement whose difficulty can only have emphasized the trouble it was designed to ameliorate. The arrangement, again, by which the tenant worked on the lord's demesne or personal estate, the home-farm, on certain fixed days in the year, was liable to be upset by bad weather or the occurrence of a Church festival. These and many other inconveniences operated to destroy rent not only in kind but in labour also. The system of money payments gradually established itself as a regular means of discharging feudal burdens, sometimes concomitantly with the old labour dues. "*Editha*," for example, whoever she may have been, "*tenet unum mesuagium et unam croftam pro 6d., et fert aquam falcatoribus.*" But in the very heart of the feudal period, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we find that the landlord's estimate of his rent, although first calculated in kind, is then estimated at its value in money. In the fourteenth century money rentals are the rule, and their general acceptance is not long delayed.<sup>1</sup>

The economic and social effects of this substitution are incalculable. A villain who could pay his lord the halfpenny a day which he was willing to accept in lieu of labour was at once placed in a position to raise himself above his hitherto servile condition. He was differentiated in practice from the ordinary villain who

<sup>1</sup> *Villainage in England*, by Dr. Paul Vinogradoff (Clarendon Press, 1892), Chap. III. Dr. Vinogradoff has examined this English question with what we must call, in spite of his name, characteristically English thoroughness.



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still worked under the superintendence of the lord's steward. He became to all intents and purposes a free man, and could transport himself whither his means would allow him; could offer his services to any of the numerous landlords who by the middle of the fourteenth century had to cultivate their demesnes on paid labour; could even become a burgess if he resided in a borough for a year and paid his civic dues with the rest. He could enter a merchant-guild, and become a successful and wealthy trader to foreign parts, to Denmark, Flanders and Scotland. If he remained a "rusticus" and had ambitions above free labour he might rise to be a free tenant, and in either capacity found himself living in a community which, though still feudal in legal theory, was no longer so in practice.

Nor was the substitution of money rent for service less effective in modifying the condition and the status of the great class of tenants who held of the barons as military knights and who bought themselves out of this obligation by money payments. The rise of the woollen trade with Flanders in the twelfth century stimulated sheep-farming on a large scale, and the consequent accumulation of funds in the hands of this class of feudal society enabled them to extend and improve their agricultural operations in general, and to become farmers on a large scale with means for the employment of numbers of free labourers. From tenants they became practically proprietors, and estate was added to estate, to which newer methods of cultivation were applied with the gradual decay of the open-field system. At the opening of the fifteenth century the ancient balks which separated the strips of land from each other were disappearing, and they gradually became a stimulating object for antiquarian research rather than the most conspicuous feature of the countryside. This breaking down of the old-fashioned divisions on the land itself was symbolical of the new social forces which were obliterating the sharp feudal distinctions between class and class. The knightly qualification tended to become based upon property other than land; knights became traders, and traders became knights. The imposition of a tax on movable

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property so early as the reign of Henry II. was a legal recognition that land was no longer the sole form of property, and that the feudal system did not cover all the facts of economic life.

And yet, in general, the legal theory of society was still feudal in opposition to the pressure of economic facts: an opposition which was the root of all the labour troubles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The proprietary classes, who themselves no longer represented feudal practice, still clung to it in theory as a means of crushing the free labourers, who were growing too numerous and independent, and who, unlike their social superiors, were unrepresented in Parliament. But all the narrow class legislation of their "Statutes of Labourers" failed to rehabilitate the dying institution of industrial feudalism, and it gave way before the principle of free labour on the one hand, and the centralization of land in fewer hands on the other. The *via dolorosa* of the labourer's long progress to political freedom it is happily not our lot to follow; but the rural labourer, whose villages still retain innumerable social and even economic traditions from the older feudal times, has at last been enabled, almost in our own time, to participate freely in common political deliberation and action with the rest of the nation, to the manifest strengthening of that national sentiment which is only felt in full perfection when all classes share it alike.

The part played by alien forces in the dissolution of the Feudal System is thus seen to have been extremely effective and far-reaching. Even where the seed of change lay buried in the native soil, it required the current of foreign influence to bring it to the light of day and to the full development of its natural powers.

But the break-up of feudalism does not exhaust the account of alien influence upon English life, and here, again, we return to the capable guidance of Dr. Cunningham.

At the time of the Reformation religious necessity rather than industrial adventure regulated the general course of immigration into England; but the national life gained no less in industrial wealth and inspiration

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from the newcomers than from the old. In the reign of Henry VIII. the religious disturbances in the North of Europe brought a considerable number of foreigners here, although the still-felt native jealousy struggled hard with religious sympathy. In three successive Tudor reigns an alien was "the provider of the King's Instruments of War." There were new accessions of foreign silk-weavers, blanket-makers, glaziers, printers, bookbinders, makers of felt hats. Starched linen was introduced by a Dutchwoman, and the Elizabethan court thus owes its stilly picturesque appearance to a foreigner and the industry she brought with her. The Queen herself infused our provincial life with many alien elements by transporting foreign tradesmen and artisans to country towns. It is clear that Manchester owes the foundation of its special prosperity to the foreigners from Antwerp who introduced cotton into this country. Not only did these people become for the most part absorbed into the population; not only did they spread their industrial arts among the natives; but some characteristic institutions of our English public life were borrowed from them. The Trade Union Movement, for example, is a development of the Friendly Society Movement, which was copied from the plans adopted by the foreign colonies in Great Britain for the relief and support of their members in poverty and sickness. The fact, too, that these groups of foreigners, with their separate traditions and their own religious institutions, existed as loyal elements of the population, had no small influence upon the spread of that spirit of toleration which is one of our typical English characteristics. Dr. Cunningham thinks that, as Norman immigrants under Edward the Confessor to some extent prepared public opinion for the accession of the Norman Conqueror, so the advent of William III. was facilitated by the presence of a considerable Dutch element in English society, and he states that there were many aliens among the London merchants who founded the Bank of England, and thus gave important financial assistance to the alien King and his policy.<sup>1</sup> The Excise was based upon a Dutch model, as the previous taxation

<sup>1</sup> *Alien Immigrants*, p. 207.



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of movable goods was based upon a Papal model. There can hardly, indeed, be placed any limit to the number of Dutch artizans who came into England during the whole of the seventeenth century, when great efforts were made to absorb the old-standing religious communities of aliens into the general body of the population.

After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, some 80,000 Huguenots landed in England; and, although many passed on their way to America, some 40,000 still remained in this country. The flower of King William's army at the battle of the Boyne was drawn from these refugees—not only its leaders, but its private soldiers as well. Further, it was a special feature of this immigration that so many of those who participated in it were men of family and education; and they have, through their descendants, left their mark upon English literature and science in particular, besides contributing a large Huguenot tradition to our national character by their dissemination through the country and their amalgamation with the general population.

We have not utilized a thousandth part of the material so generously supplied by Dr. Cunningham in support of the tribute which he pays to the share which aliens have had in the formation of our national tradition and culture. But we have selected sufficient examples to show, once and again, that nationality is not a gift of race, but an amalgamation of different cultural traditions in one common atmosphere. Our industrial and social organism is as composite as our political; but it is interpenetrated by the same spirit of national unity, in spite of the importance of some of the subordinate interests which combine to its formation. Indeed, mere political unity is not only a body without a soul, but a skeleton without flesh and sinews; and a common King, common Laws and a common Parliament have no meaning or value except as the organized expression of common hopes, common interests and common sympathies. And as our political unity is the result of the amalgamation of different principles of administration derived from various sources, so our social unity owes a large part of its strength to the skill with which it has embodied the innumerable foreign elements which have contributed to its shaping. We,

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too, have been an international "melting-pot," and those who have come here from foreign lands, bringing their national traditions of culture and character with them, have disappeared as separate elements to fuse in the one national whole. We cannot discriminate to-day, by any peculiarity of action or thought or feeling, between the descendants of those who were aliens a few generations ago and of those who were here in the days of Alfred and Egbert. The progeny of the 40,000 Huguenots who settled in England are not credited with any national sympathy with the descendants of the Huguenots who went to Frankfort or the Baltic Provinces at the same time; and, if the Flemish Protestants whom Mary drove to Germany had been allowed to remain in England, we cannot imagine that their descendants would have been less British in sentiment than they are German in the country which welcomed their parents. Dr. Cunningham is inclined to believe that the benefits of continuing the traditional British policy of extending hospitality to aliens are exhausted. Be that as it may, those who accept the view maintained in these pages, that nationality is the product of education and environment, the result of a tradition, will see reason for doubting the wisdom of the facility with which aliens have been able formally to adopt the complete rights of British citizenship. Five years' residence in the United Kingdom, or five years' work in the service of the Crown, are not sufficient to dissolve the sympathies born of childish associations and youthful training in a foreign tradition. It seems questionable whether, as a general rule, there should be any naturalization of adults at all. Early subjection to the national tradition, early training in the national culture, are the only regular and effective means for the production of patriots. Children of aliens settled here, and intending to remain here, would naturally be dominated by the British tradition in spite of any alien sympathies sentimentally cherished in the domestic atmosphere; and for the second generation there should thus be full participation in national rights and privileges. But not for the first, except in the rarest cases, where British nationality might be conferred as a reward for special national or civic services, as a knighthood or a baronetcy

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is now conferred. Nor should a Secretary of State possess absolute discretion to confer or refuse nationality even in these limited cases; the decision should lie with a representative body of the alien's British fellow-citizens, after the style of the ancient institution of "the sworn inquest of neighbours"; in other words, a local jury, who alone are in possession of sufficient information to judge whether the foreigner settled in their midst is fitted by his conduct and sympathies to be an Englishman. Then, and then only, after a unanimous verdict of consent and recommendation from his English neighbours, should the alien be naturalized; and any change of name from foreign to British which might seem desirable in such a case should no longer be effected, as Schadenhofers are turned into Sylvesters, and Morgensteins into Montroses, by the easy formality of a deed poll or the still more casual newspaper advertisement. Nationality is not transformed by a change of name, nor by a brief contact with a new national tradition; it is a fruit perfected by prolonged nurture in a favourable soil and by the constant influence of a congenial atmosphere.

What would have been the political constitution and social condition of the British people to-day without the constant influx of alien traditions, bringing new and broader interests in their train, it would be impossible to state with any accuracy of detail; and it is clear that in many respects the constituents of our national life would have been different from what they are now. But it must not be imagined that the progressive stream of national development would have ceased to broaden and strengthen without their tributary aid. Life in society is always capable of progress, owing to the accumulation of experience and the production of varieties of individual character; and, even if no alien had landed on our shores after the Norman Conquest, there were already established here a number of distinct traditions whose progressive amalgamation has been the most conspicuous feature of our national history. Besides, it takes a long time to exhaust the direct environmental influences of such a geographical situation as ours. The continuous play and interplay of these



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domiciliar traditions; the differences of physical and social environment prevailing in different parts of the British Islands; the effects of these upon different minds, and through them upon the community at large: could not, we imagine, have failed to establish our political, social and industrial life substantially upon its present general lines. For example, the Reformation in England, productive as it was of the most far-reaching national events, had been anticipated by England herself by the teaching of Wycliffe and the Lollards, who had independently developed the main principles of the doctrine subsequently elaborated in Germany and Geneva. The right of the individual man to interpret the Bible for himself, and the denial of the Transubstantiation, already in the fifteenth century separated English religious life into two competing spheres of spiritual interest; and the fact that these spheres of interest were shaken together, and confused, and broken in pieces, by the political interests with which they came into sympathetic contact or violent opposition, serves the better to illustrate the general truth that progress is dependent upon the mutual interaction of different spheres of interest. The opposing interests of property and free labour cut across the interests of religious life, and the Lollards were suppressed, not because of their religious, but their social and political, tenets. New spheres of domestic interest have constantly arisen, to be finally amalgamated with, or at any rate brought into subordination to, the general conception of nationality. English Catholics and English Protestants, bitterly hostile as their competing interests were in the days of Elizabeth, found themselves equally Englishmen in face of the Spanish threat; and although the forces of nationality are not on all occasions equally active and dominating they form a permanent background of sentiments and interests which are always successfully appealed to at times of national necessity. That they are not more constantly exhibited is due to the fact that the circumstances operating upon our national life have not yet been properly interpreted, either by the nation as a whole or by the representative personalities who guide

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its fortunes. An intelligent and effective and universally self-conscious patriotism can only become a permanently active endowment of our national character when the social environment of every particular individual, and the direct and conscious training which he receives from his childhood, are such as to convince him that he owes everything to England, and that England in return claims everything from him. You cannot expect a casual dock-labourer to show the patriotism of the Eton boy, partly because the nation does little that is distinctively national for the casual labourer, and partly because the Eton boy, starting with the very stones of his "cloisters," receives a better, if not a perfect, education in what he owes to his country. Patriotism, as we said in opening this chapter, must be taught, not only by the general effect of the social entourage but by the conscious and deliberate instruction of youth. When the social entourage of the dock-labourer and the derelict are systematically taken in hand by the wise action of statesmen and legislators—who have recognized his existence only when his services were wanted and neglected him entirely at other times—and when he is also intelligently educated to recognize what he owes to his country; when patriotism is taught systematically and sanely to the childhood and youth of every class of the community;—we shall then attain the final condition of a permanent and universal sentiment of nationality. Every person born in the country should be so trained as to give to the country what his natural capacities fit him to give, and to receive from his country what his natural capacities fit him to receive.

Meantime, we should be grateful that the action of events and of the personalities who have guided them have operated to give the national sentiment even its present degree of compelling force. With the progress of a more general education, and a more direct participation in political power, we are aware of a constantly increasing tendency in the various parties, sects and interests in the State to subordinate their special activities to the paramount claims of the community as a whole. The intersection and modification of separatist spheres of interest by other spheres of interest

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of more general application has been a natural development of our social and political life during the whole course of our national history. It is a process as constantly active in modern as in mediæval and ancient times. The mutually persecuting animosities of religious sects were mollified as members of the separate faiths began to intermingle in commercial, artistic, literary and political circles of activity. You cannot meet a man in friendly competition or co-operation at a business counter and then burn him in chains over a slow fire. The apparently internecine animosities of opposing politicians fade away in the atmosphere of the common social life to which they all belong. This gradual emergence of public amenity from the storm and stress of private animosity, even when that animosity has been expressed and guided by legislative enactments, has been one of the main causes of that consolidation of national unity which we have witnessed since the Revolution. Always the intermingling of separate, even opposing, spheres of interest has led to the formation of broader interests in which the original divergencies have become academic or sentimental traditions and at last have faded away. And even where animosities still exist between opposing policies in trade, religion, or local government, the final justification pleaded by the conflicting parties is that their special attitude is exclusively directed by considerations of the national interest.

The nationalizing process is a process of education, whether by the mutual action and interaction of social spheres of interest or by the conscious and deliberate direction of the national mind. This process has hitherto secured large results; but it may be confidently predicted that the forces of nationality, accentuated and harmonized as never before by the shock of war, will be placed upon a more thorough and systematic educational basis, and will thereby be brought to a state of more effective solidarity than has, perhaps, hitherto been conceived possible.



## CHAPTER XII

The Principle of Commingling of Atmospheres as applied to Literature—"Race" in Literature—Growth of national Literature—Anglo-Saxon Literature rather a Branch of universal Literature than national; the national Atmosphere dominated by the cosmopolitan Tradition of Rome—Chaucer: his Work due to a Commingling of Elements—Native Influences no less than foreign form Part of his Environment—Nothing in Chaucer can be explained by his "Race"—How he contributed to form a national Literature: (1) By treating of Things in which Englishmen as such were interested, (2) By treating of foreign Things in such a way as to make them interesting to the English—National Literature firmly founded by Chaucer.

THE brief historical and literary sketches given in the last six chapters illustrate with sufficient clearness the notion which the writer has formed of the manner in which a national atmosphere is created and national character and national sentiment established. Although it is manifestly impossible for any single inquirer to follow this process as it operates through all the prolonged epochs of our national life, yet the writer must confess that it is with a certain serenity of confidence that he appeals to specialists in the history of our social, political, literary and artistic development; to experts in ecclesiastical, municipal and parochial lore; to students of science, philosophy and conduct alike; for corroboration of his view that everywhere the story of national evolution is the same; that everywhere the process of development is that of a tradition modified from generation to generation by an ever-changing environment, and broadening from community to community by the intermingling of traditions and atmospheres. In social habits, in political institutions, in artistic, scientific and philosophical acquisitions, the progress of a people is not dependent upon race, but upon environment in its widest and most comprehensive sense. How else does it happen that patriotism does

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not depend upon blood, but upon association and interest? How else does it happen that of all the varied stocks who inhabit these Islands there is not one whose claims to be regarded as especially "national" would not be repudiated with laughing scorn by the remainder? How else does it happen that where the British national sentiment is weak the phenomenon can be assigned to causes which have nothing to do with race, but have everything to do with the conscious or unconscious attitude assumed by the dominant social or political partner to the weaker, or by the weaker to the dominant? If Ireland has been at any time anti-British in political sentiment, it is not because her people belong to different races from the British, but because British statesmen and Irish leaders have not so guided the destinies of their peoples as to cause their common interests to dominate their separate interests. The two environments have not affected each other in such a way as to bring about that sympathetic harmony which has been the rule in other parts of the kingdom. To argue in a contrary sense is to give the lie to the proud boast which claims that our Imperial policy has been such as to make French Canadians as patriotic as Scotsmen, and Boers as imperialistic as Cockneys.

And not in politics only does this principle apply. Although attempts have been made to weigh, measure, and compare the amount of patriotism shown by this or that great writer beyond his fellows, to suggest that the result, such as it was, has any relation to the blood of the writer would be a notion admittedly puerile and fantastic. We believe that critics have tried to explain some aspects of Shakespeare's genius by his "Celtic" descent. But if a high degree of poetic imagination were a product of the "Celtic race" as such, the wonder would be to find so many "Celts" as deficient in imagination as the proudest "Teuton." Shakespeare is not great because he is Teuton, Celtic, Scandinavian, or Turanian, because he is dolichocephalic or brachycephalic; that is, by virtue of the racial qualities supposed to be denoted by these terms; but because Nature, who never produces two things alike, formed him a being possessing the common powers of humanity to such a

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degree and in such a kind that, aided by his environment, he was able to produce results of a specially admirable and beautiful sort. But the result was a human result, and not a Celtic, Scandinavian, Teuton, Turanian, dolichocephalic or brachycephalic result. It was an English result in so far as its expression was moulded by the forms of the English language, and by the conditions of the poet's life as an Elizabethan Englishman. That his art makes a human appeal which is responded to by people belonging to many different "races" is an incidental corroboration of the argument. We submit that Shakespeare's "universality" is due to the extraordinary quality and degree in which he exhibited certain general human powers; in a word, to his genius. The special force of his appeal to one people is due to the fact that his genius worked in an environment which fell to him as born and reared in the historic tradition of that people. To assert that there is anything especially Celtic in his work merely means, if it means anything, that his environment, either by family tradition or otherwise, brought him under the influence of those methods of feeling and thinking which had formed part of the Celtic environment.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, if there is one branch of artistic productiveness which exemplifies more fully than any other the reasonableness of our argument, that branch is the sphere of literary activity, although, at the same time, no branch of artistic productiveness has furnished more pretexts for the fanciful divagations of the racial theorist. Widespread as racial idolatry is, it is especially rampant in the histories of national literature. It is, of course, quite true that national literature *is* national literature; that there are broad differences between the literatures of England, France, Germany, and Russia—differences which are not measured by differences of language alone, but which express differ-

<sup>1</sup> "Warwickshire muss zu denjenigen englischen Grafschaften gehört haben, in denen alte Bräuche, alte Ueberlieferungen am kräftigsten fortlebten. Von den Anfängen der englischen Geschichte her war dies ein Gebiet, in dem verschiedene Stämme oder auch Nationalitäten sich berührten: zuerst Westsachsen und Kelten, dann Westsachsen und Angeln," etc.—*Shakespeare*, by B. Ten Brink, p. 19.



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ences of outlook, differences of ideal, and differences of historical development. That there are similarities, too, it would be futile to deny—similarities due to participation in a common traditional culture, as, for example, the culture of Greece and Rome the gift of the Renaissance to literary Europe as a whole; and, also for example, the similarities due to the conscious or unconscious imitation by the writers of one nation of the literary standards of another. But the differences prevail over the similarities to such an extent as to leave in each case something which can only be described as national, if we are to use words in the sense which they usually convey. Now these national differences are ascribed with striking unanimity among historians of literature to the racial element which is supposed to separate fundamentally one nation from another. Even where several distinct nationalities are assigned to the same race, as in the case of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, the assumed general characteristics of the Scandinavian race are attributed in one comprehensive generalization to the three literatures, which, however, are marked by striking national differences. Taine, whose wonderful book on English literature is the type and exemplar of modern works of this kind, assigns to *Race* the first place among the three formative influences upon our literary productiveness.<sup>1</sup> When, of course, it was thought that national differences were based upon differences of race it was fatally natural and easy to explain all differences of national activity in this way. The wonder is that modern ethnological discoveries as to the mixed racial origin of European nations have not admittedly destroyed the possibility of such an explanation. The greater wonder still is that the differences between national literature have not been explained by differences of national environment. And the greatest wonder of all is that, with differences of national literature manifestly existing, and with such a reasonable explanation ready to hand, there are some people who, having

<sup>1</sup> *History of English Literature*, by H. A. Taine, D.C.L. Translated from the French by H. van Laun. In four vols. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906). Intro., p. 17.

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disproved the existence of racial literature, think they have equally disproved the existence of national literature. But as the writer believes that in the principle of organic continuity of common interest there is to be found a scientific explanation of the growth of nationality and national character, so he is convinced that in the same principle there lies an explanation of the growth and development of national literature. It is quite natural that this should be so. If it be true, as an English critic has said, that "the full mind of a nation is its literature,"<sup>1</sup> and, as a German critic has asserted, that "creative poetry," the highest kind of literature, "can only be derived from the inward life of a people,"<sup>2</sup> it is quite reasonable to expect to find in the literature of a people at once a record and an example of the actual processes of social life and development. When dealing with the German tribes of Tacitus as compared with the people of *Beowulf*, we noted that certain characteristics were common to the people of the two epochs, but that the later had acquired certain other characteristics which could only have been due to the variegated historical environment through which the original tribes and their successive representatives had passed. We also saw that the *Beowulf* people were deficient in certain characteristics which subsequently marked the British people, and which were to be acquired by the discipline of later historical environments. This process, we submit, is the secret of the development of that great branch of specially national art, English literature. Right away from the beginning of our literary history, the record of our growth in literary productiveness is a record of the results produced upon one tendency by the influence of other tendencies, by the commingling of environments from various external sources upon that environment which, for well-understood purposes of descriptive convenience, may be called the native or English environment.

The only examples we possess of Pagan English litera-

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *English Writers*, Intro., p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, by Augustus William Schlegel, translated by John Black (London, 1815), Vol. I. p. 283.

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ture are so fragmentary both in number and form that it is worse than useless to attempt to found upon them any general conclusions as to the literary characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon invaders. The very most we can say is that the *Far Traveller*, the *Wanderer*, and the *Seafarer* corroborate the conclusions we have already drawn from an examination of the Saga of *Beowulf*.<sup>1</sup> But that epic did not take its present form until the ninth century, and that Christian influence had operated upon its production might be gathered from the fact that it appealed subsequently to Caedmon and Aldhelm, as well as from an examination of the poem itself. Indeed, the one great fact in the history of Anglo-Saxon literature lies in the general interpenetration of the Pagan environment of battle and good cheer with the calmer graces of the Christian atmosphere. Every now and again the old note comes defiantly out, as in the "Battle of Maldon" and some short poems in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*;<sup>2</sup> but Caedmon sees English rural life only as it is dominated by the neighbouring religious foundation, and retells the Biblical story to his countrymen with more than Hebrew realism. If

<sup>1</sup> The passion for wandering combined with longing for home; the love of the sea combined with yearning for the land; the desire to be alone combined with a joyous anticipation of the coming social revel in the Mead Hall—all the elements of these contrasts still form part of our character as a people. In the *Wanderer* there is described one who is—

"Not over hot in his heart, nor over swift in his speech,  
Nor faint of soul nor secure, nor fain for the fight nor afraid,  
Nor ready to boast before he know himself well arrayed."

(Translation by Emily H. Hickey in *Translations from Old English Poetry* (Cook & Tinker. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1902). Most Englishmen know men of this character, and the traits are at times conspicuous in our national activities or inactivities.

<sup>2</sup> *The Battle of Maldon, and Short Poems from the Saxon Chronicle*, edited with Introduction, Notes and Glossary, by Walter John Sedgefield, Litt.D. (Boston and London: D. C. Heath, 1904). The Joy of Battle and Loyalty to one's Lord are the dominant notes of the "Battle of Maldon" (or "The Song of Bryhtnoth's Death"). "Germanic poetry can show no fairer nor more powerful picture of true loyalty."—Zernial, *Das Lied von Bryhtnoth's Fall*, quoted by Sedgefield, Intro., p. vii.



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Aldhelm gathers an audience on Sherborne bridge by reciting vulgar English ballads, it is done under false pretences, and he makes the balance of Christian propriety more than even by treating the crowd to a description of the horrors of the grave in the true spirit of the preaching friar. Although of princely Saxon blood, Aldhelm readily imbibed the culture of Irish Christianity from Maildulf at Malmesbury, and then learned with equal facility all that the foreigners Theodore and Hadrian could teach him of Greek, Latin and Hebrew at Canterbury. If Alcuin and Bede are Englishmen by birth and speech, they soon sink their native insularity in the cosmopolitanism of Rome, and write eloquent histories and precise systems of education in the language of Lactantius, Symmachus and St. Augustine, adorning their pages with passages from the Christian poets, Prudentius and Ausonius. Cynewulf writes long poems in the language of *Beowulf*, but they deal with legends of the saints, and not with legends of the Pagan gods; although ever and anon we descry the faded forms of the ancient deities looming vaguely through the dim atmosphere of Christian mysticism. If Alfred gives his people good English, he goes for the substance of his matter to Boethius and Orosius. With teachers such as these, and educated in this way, what wonder that the great scholastic institution at Malmesbury, Jarrow, York, Canterbury and the rest were centres radiating Roman culture among all those who wished to make any literary appeal to the Anglo-Saxon community? The Latin atmosphere rested on the land, and English literature, even when written in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, is cosmopolitan, not only in tone and style, but in subject as well. It is no doubt true, as ecclesiastical historians insist, that "while its conversion restored England to the older commonwealth of nations, the circumstances which brought it about tended in an eminent degree to maintain the national character of the Church thus founded"; that "the English Church was saved from the infection of court life and corruption, which forms nearly the whole history of the Franco-Gallic Church"; that "in England, almost alone in the West, a purely national Church

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arose";<sup>1</sup> yet it is none the less true that so far as literary productiveness was concerned the national environment was dominated by foreign influences, and one seeks almost in vain for the expression in literature of those purely English qualities exhibited in the early poem of *Beowulf*. Alcuin of York was no more English than Theodore was a Greek, or Hadrian an Italian. The fatal endowment of race was dropped with the facility of a worn-out costume, and men of widely different origin bore the same stamp; all were subjects of that *civitas Dei* which gave a common spiritual interest, and to some extent a common political interest, to all who were born or baptized beneath its sway.

The severe discipline of the Danish invasions, with their irruption of butchery and brutality, effected a temporary change of environment which was reflected in the sparse literature of the period. The "Battle of Maldon," with its return to the Pagan note, belongs to this period, and Ælfrie, the Christian bishop, revels in bloodshed with all the abandon of a Pagan bareserk.

Speaking in general, we may say that the history of English literature from the ninth to the fourteenth century is the history of the struggle of the native Pagan literary tradition to keep itself in being beneath the ocean of cosmopolitan ecclesiasticism which rushed in to overwhelm it. And as it was only a tradition, and not a racial endowment, it was subject to the chances and changes which fall to the lot of all social tendencies. The Latin tradition established in England in Anglo-Saxon times continues unchecked until it is lost in the richer and broader stream of Classical influence which poured into England during a later period, at which we shall arrive in due course. Meantime, until Norman-French influence establishes itself in England with Chaucer, we note how the native English literary muse struggles painfully along in pedestrian garb, still under the religious influence of the earlier period.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Conversion of the West," *The English*, by the Rev. G. F. Maclear, D.D. (Pp. 166-7 Dr. Maclear quotes Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, I. 81, and refers to Green, *History of the English People*, I. 42.)

<sup>2</sup> *The Dark Ages*, by W. P. Ker (Wm. Blackwood & Sons, 1904), deals in Chapter III. with the Latin authors of the Period. The *English* Latin authors are treated with particular care and fulness.

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While hundreds of learned monks and high ecclesiastical dignitaries produced thousands of theological tracts and so-called histories, chiefly of the universe; while Englishmen were writing elaborate works of history and law and theology in Latin, and were thus perpetuating the foreign tradition introduced with Christianity; other Englishmen translated these works into English, or, already influenced by the new Norman-French atmosphere, were pouring forth, one after the other, prose versions, in English, of popular French Romances, such as the *Romance of the Holy Grail*, the *Romance of Lancelot*, *Merlin*, *Morte D'Arthur* and *Tristram*. Under the influence of this double distraction we can see what was being done with the native English literature if we take up, say, Morris' *Specimens of Early English*.<sup>1</sup> Of the nineteen specimens given there, seven are in prose and twelve in verse. The seven prose selections all deal with religious subjects except one, which is a passage from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The other twelve are chiefly romances of the kind just mentioned. All that one can say of these is that they must represent, better than any other class of composition, what the native Anglo-Saxon genius would have produced unassisted from any other source than Roman Christianity. It can hardly be called literature at all: it is poor, weak and ineffective. The wells of inspiration were dried up or the means of expression were uncouth and inexpert. With *Mandeville* and Chaucer we have again a striking example of what can be accomplished for literature by a sympathetic intermingling of foreign with native elements. In *Mandeville* we have an almost perfect prose, in which Latin and English are welded in equal harmony; and in Chaucer we have the fullest expression of the national life resulting from the commingling of French and English artistic methods, French and English vocabularies, and French and English social life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Specimens of Early English*, edited by the Rev. Richard Morris, LL.D. Part I, A.D. 1150-1300. Second Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887).

<sup>2</sup> *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, edited by A. W. Pollard (London: Macmillan & Co., 1905). *The Complete Works of Geoffrey*



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If there ever was a case in which the character of the output of a great poet was a question of environmental influence, the case of Geoffrey Chaucer is emphatically such a case. All the critics alike, Lowell, Ten Brink, Mr. Skeat and Mr. Pollard place a preponderant portion of their Chaucerian exegesis in describing the result upon the poet of the various foreign influences to which he was subjected. Now, if certain qualities of Chaucer's style and matter are explicable by the environment of his French and Italian literary and social experiences; if we trace grace of expression to the influence of this model; subtlety of characterization to another; dramatic vividness of description to a third; nay, leaving aside mere questions of artistry, if we say he learned cynicism from this source, tenderness from that, outspoken freedom of thought from still another; if we explicitly assert that the quality of his work was a question of environment so far as foreign influences affected him; how can we consistently refuse to apply the same argument to what is called the characteristically English element in his work? Still more, if we reflect that part of Chaucer's *English* environment during his youth and early manhood in court circles was the tradition of court poetry represented by his contemporaries, Machault, Deschamps, Froissart and Gransson; if we follow the critics in imputing certain qualities of his poetry to this environment; where is our right to say that certain other arbitrarily selected qualities described as typically English shall be detached from their environment and assigned to the operation of racial influences operating in the blood of the poet? If Chaucer, say in the *Book of the Duchesse*, while for the most part adhering with servile imitation to the model of Machault, introduces a passage showing that he is alert in eye and ear for all the charms of an

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*Chaucer*, by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat, Litt.D., LL.D., PH.D., M.A. (Oxford, Clarendon Press; London, Henry Frowde, 1901). Lowell, Essay on "Chaucer" in *My Study Windows*. *Chaucer*, by Alfred W. Pollard, M.A. (London, Macmillan & Co., 1903; "Literature Primers"). *History of English Literature*, by B. Ten Brink—translated from the German by W. Clarke Robinson, PH.D. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1901), Vol. II. pp. 33 *sqq.*

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English spring, why should the one effect be assigned to "race" and the other to experience? It is all a matter of the mingling of different environments; and if Chaucer as he gets older pays greater, but by no means sole, attention to the things he sees and hears in England, it is because the circumstances of his own life and the general trend of social development at the time plunge him deeper into a purely English environment. Moreover, if race explains genius, then obviously genius should explain race. If we can foretell a man's characteristics by knowing his descent, then clearly we should be able to deduce his race from his characteristics. But the critics are still doubtful whether Chaucer was an Englishman or a Frenchman by racial descent.<sup>1</sup> The fact is, that genius is a special product of no particular race. Nature, prodigally prolific in individual differences, equipped this man with powers different from those of his fellows, and these depend for their development entirely upon the social environment which operates upon the individual characteristics. And to that extent there is truth in Dr. Johnson's oft-condemned definition of genius as "a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction"; the determining factor being, of course, the impulsion, in this direction or that, of the social environment.<sup>2</sup>

"My Master Chaucer in his time  
After the French he did it rhyme,"

sings Lydgate of the poem beginning—

"Almighty and most merciable queen"

and if that particular line shows no particularly French influence, neither can it be claimed as particularly English.<sup>3</sup> No other Englishman of that date, and very few of later date, could have written so solemn and stately a verse as that. It belongs to Geoffrey Chaucer; that it

<sup>1</sup> At any rate on the spindle side. If the name Chaucer was that of a Frenchman who came over with the Conqueror, or even in the reign of Henry III., we have no right to disregard the high probability of intermarriage with English women.

<sup>2</sup> *Lives of the Poets*: "Cowley."—"The true genius is a mind," etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Chaucer*: "An A.B.C." (Skeat, p. 80).

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is written in English after a French model does not prevent it from being individual. Individuality belongs to no race by divine right, and if we are to find out what is specially English in Chaucer, we must attempt to dissociate the results of his English environment from the results of the French and Italian environments from whose influence he never wholly escaped. No critic was ever so wide of the mark as Hazlitt (whose *Essay on Chaucer*, however, is undeservedly neglected) when he says that "in our author's time there were none of the commonplaces of poetical diction, no reflected lights of fancy, no borrowed roseate tints. He was obliged to inspect things for himself." So far from the poet's muse not being hampered by the traditions of an artificial school of verse, the danger was, indeed, at first that the poet should fall too much under the influence of that artificial school of verse; that he should become merely a mirror reflecting the French tradition in vogue at court; that he would simply be content to depend on French models, repeating all their ideas and modes of expression. These French models were crowded with commonplaces of poetical thought and diction; they were unreal and detached from life, as courts and court poets tend to be. Poetry has become with them largely a matter of phrases, as it became in later times with the successors of the school of Pope. The history of the development of Chaucer's genius is not the history of the development of any racial qualities that may be imputed to him, but the history of his liberation from entire thralldom to his courtly environment by the influence of his Italian and native English experience. The expanding environment broadened his experience and allowed his individuality freer power of choice and action.

But if it be true that there is no sign of what is called *racial* poetry in Chaucer, it is none the less true that he was emphatically the founder of an English *national* poetry. To put it quite simply, this is due to the two facts: (1) that he gives poetical shape to the scenes and characters and events which exist in the common environment of himself and other Englishmen: to scenes and characters and events which affect them as



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Englishmen, and in which, as Englishmen, they feel that common interest which lies at the basis of all nationality; and (2) that he deals with his foreign material in such a manner as to make it part and parcel of their possession as Englishmen; he endues it with that common interest which appeals to Englishmen; he makes it part of their national possession; he nationalizes it.

It would be futile to attempt to separate these two tendencies in Chaucer's work. The history of his development as national poet is the history of the development of all national life, whether in art or experience. It is the history of a process which commingles foreign environments with the existing English environment, and thus creates a new and more spacious English environment. It is true that, as Chaucer developed, his attention was directed more closely upon the scenes and characters of actual English life, as may be proved by reference to the "Prologue" of the *Canterbury Tales*. But there was always the commingling of environments, even in the "Tales" themselves. No single story in that lengthy poem can be proved to be the poet's own invention. He goes to the Troubadours for epic "*Chansons de geste*"; to the Trouvères for tales of common life; to Dante for tragedy; to Boccaccio for comedy; to mediæval Latin literature for satire on women; to Travellers' Tales, like those of Marco Polo, lately written, for incidents of marvel and adventure; to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for dainty "romances" of love, its sufferings and rewards; he appropriates Latin, Italian and French stories belonging to that floating, anonymous mass of tales and traditions which had found their way into the conversation of mediæval Europe from Classical and Oriental sources. But also he goes for subjects to the real life of his English environment, and the *Canterbury Tales* give convincing proof that the varying experiences through which the poet had passed had taught him at last to see things steadily and clearly with his own eyes, and had taught him no less effectively the artistic skill of transferring what he sees into his verses. With all its indebtedness to others for subjects and incidents, for

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tricks of artistry and methods of style, there never was a poem which to the same degree and in the same convincing manner as the *Canterbury Tales* is inspired by the freshness and charm of a genius feeling itself in contact with actual life and transferring that life to the written page with such added freshness and charm.

But not only does Chaucer present his own English atmosphere in this engaging and convincing manner, thus laying the foundation of his claim to be a national poet; he also finds means to combine with this all the different elements he borrows from foreign atmospheres, presenting a harmonized and unified whole to be a national possession for Englishmen for ever. It is thus he nationalizes poetry to harmonize with the growing nationality of the English people. That growth of common interest which makes a nation makes also national poetry. No longer does the highest art make an appeal solely to courts and nobles—there is something, indeed, for them, as there is also something for merchants, priests, tradesmen, scholars and artizans;—every aspect of the national life is presented in him, and in such a manner that every rank of national life can easily and clearly study the picture. Chaucer's achievement, again, was to have founded *national* poetry—to have created a rich body of material to which, when the time came, the most truly national poets appealed for guidance and inspiration. Whatever other elements were to be transferred to our English national atmosphere, that, at any rate, must ever form a part of it.

We fear that from this point onwards it is but elucidating the obvious to show how the development of our literature—that literature specifically called English—has been conditioned by the constant immission into the English environment of more or less powerful currents of foreign influence. This is not the same thing as saying that our literature is foreign literature; although, when one considers how seldom it has been wanting in external stimuli of inspiration, material, form and direction, one might be tempted to assert that there is no such thing as English literature. Those, indeed, who, while denying that race is the

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foundation of nationality, cannot find a more reasonable basis for that phenomenon, have no alternative but to conclude that English literature is not national literature, but merely a branch of universal literature accidentally expressed in a particular language. But just as nationality in the general sense is a conscious recognition of an organic continuity of common interest, so a national literature is the artistic expression of that common interest. As soon as a foreign influence becomes part of the national atmosphere it becomes a common national possession, and the extent to which it becomes a common national possession is conditioned by the relation which the existing national tradition assumes towards it. The conscious feeling of continuity, therefore, is never lost, and the development of literature is the development of common interest to include ever wider and more fruitful fields; and as one part of communal growth is the development, through social intercourse, of a common way of looking at things, so, after all, foreign influences depend for their success or failure in affecting a national literature upon the way in which the nation regards them. The Renaissance influence upon England produced results totally different to what it produced in France or in Spain; and one of the most remarkable and interesting aspects of the national literature of the Age of Elizabeth is that involved in a study of the way in which Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton combined the various currents of the Renaissance influence to produce a literature which was in the truest sense of the word national. So that while the history of literature is still, in England, very largely the history of foreign influences, it is, from Chaucer onwards, the history of foreign influences upon a stream of native tradition powerful enough in common interest to maintain certain special characteristics of its own, while welding the foreign material more and more successfully into harmony with its own tradition. The foreign influence never for one moment ceases. It comes pouring in constantly from Italy, France and Spain. The growth of literature from Chaucer to Spenser is still a process in which a foreign influence operates upon a native



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element, until the union of the two, by the success of its appeal to the common interest, produces a literature which bears the characteristic marks of originality and independence in spite of the importance of the foreign element. Before Chaucer, however, the foreign influence is strong and all-pervasive, almost all-subversive, and we have seen that there was some danger lest the native English literature should, even in its greatest representative, become a mere re-echoing of foreign words. After his day it is indirect and slow in its operation; it is more gradually, and therefore more effectively, absorbed into the sphere of the common national interest; and the consequence is that, when again a period of great literary productiveness arises, we have works distinctively national in a far more effective sense than in the preceding periods. We can easily measure the extent of the foreign influence by comparing an English gentleman's library in the middle of the fifteenth century with, say, the library of Raleigh, Sidney, or Leicester in the sixteenth.<sup>1</sup> But the influence is most conspicuous in Spenser, who, nevertheless, is more completely and comprehensively a national poet than even Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*. But Spenser is far too great a figure, and the age to which he belongs is far too important in the story of our national literature, that we should make apology for trying to corroborate our thesis by a closer examination both of Spenser and the illustrious epoch which formed his appropriate environment.

<sup>1</sup> *The Paston Letters*, 1422-1509, edited by James Gairdner of the Public Record Office, 1872. One of the letters contains an account of an English gentleman's library in the Reign of Edward IV. (1461-1483). The library consisted of: (1) Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*, (2) Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* (*Parlement of Byrdes*), (3) Lydgate's *Temple of Glass*, (4) Alain Chartier's *Belle Dame Sans Merci*, (5) *Guy, Earl of Warwick*, (6) *Guy of Colbrond*, (7) *Sir Gavaine and the Green Knight*, (8) *The Death of King Arthur*, (9) *King Richard Cœur de Lion* (10), (11), (12) Cicero, *De Senectute*, *De Amicitia*, *De Sapientia*; and some few others. (See Gairdner's edition, Vol. III. pp. 300-2, *The Inventory off Englysshe Boks off John —*.)

## CHAPTER XIII

The Influence of the Renaissance as a literary Movement in England—Its three main Currents: Classical, Italian, Romantic—Spenser: the typical Representative of the Elizabethan Age in Literature—He harmonizes into a new national Unity the domestic Tradition and the foreign Traditions influencing it—Spanish Influence on English Literature—General Indebtedness of our national Literature to foreign Sources—Influence of Literature in extending the Spheres of the common Interests of Nations—The "Literary Confederation of Europe."

WE have already seen that the growth of literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer is a process by which various environmental influences, some native, some foreign, operate to produce a body of work which can be described with truth as definitely and characteristically English. The development of literature from Chaucer to Spenser is, in like manner, a process in which this definite and characteristic national result is subjected to other environmental influences, some foreign, some native, until the fusion of the separate elements again produces a great literature, national in its independence and originality in spite of the formative power of the foreign elements. The scope and proportions of this book will not admit of any detailed illustration of the manner in which the great external influences operated upon the national atmosphere from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century; and the writer must perforce be content to do little more than emphasize, from his point of view, the generally accepted thesis that the national literature of the Age of Elizabeth was largely inspired and moulded by influences emanating from the Italy of the Renaissance. This does not mean, of course, that English literature was Italian, any more than French, German, Spanish, Russian or Bohemian literature was Italian because each of them was affected by the Italian Renaissance. It chiefly means that in

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England the experiences, thoughts and emotions of which life was made, found artistic expression in forms which Italian writers had proved to be beautiful and effective for their purpose. Human experiences, thought and emotions are not the special prerogative of any nation; it is the manner of their exhibition in active or passive life that marks the national character; and from this point of view a very distinctive and enduring influence was exercised by the Italian Renaissance upon the evolution of literature in England.

But it would be a profound mistake to suggest that the success of the Italian influence upon English literature was a question of literary influence alone. The Italian Renaissance was in intimate relationship with vital and fundamental human emotions and ideas. The Renaissance has been too often and too readily regarded as a purely literary movement, as if it were the "new learning" and nothing else. But even had it expressed itself in literature alone, a purely literary movement it could never have been. It was, in essence, a revolt against tyranny in the sphere of the intellect, in the sphere of the emotions, and in the sphere of conduct; and it was because the literary methods and forms of the Italian Renaissance gave cogent expression to this sense of human revolt that they had so great an influence in inspiring and regulating the literary expression of the revolt in countries other than Italy. The practical re-discovery of the literatures of Greece and Rome which initiates the Renaissance is inseparably associated with the great literary names of Petrarch and Boccaccio. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that before the Renaissance the literature of Mediæval Europe had been predominantly theological in tone and substance. So far as literature was concerned, it was the constant policy of the Church to devote it entirely to religious ends. Bishop Fulbert of Chartres in the eleventh century expressly asserted that "literature is only worth cultivating in so far as it ministers to a man's knowledge of divine things. It is the prime duty of life to prepare for the eternal fatherland hereafter. Without this presiding thought there is infinite



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danger in the study of Letters.”<sup>1</sup> Even in dealing with so Pagan a production as the Celtic legends of King Arthur, a learned cleric spiritualized the whole cycle by connecting it with the Christian legend of the “Holy Grail”; and the Church claimed for its own the free-thinking, profane, even blasphemous *Romaunt of the Rose* by “baptizing it,” as Lowell says, “with the holy water of allegory.”<sup>2</sup> Literature, as well as philosophy, was ancillary to theology; and as it was the Renaissance which liberated men’s minds from this thralldom it is natural to have emphasized its importance as a purely literary movement.

What a change was effected can be seen at a glance when we come to the English literature of the age of Elizabeth. Literature is no longer a mere guide to the eternal fatherland hereafter; it is a vivid representation in Drama, Epic and Lyric, History and Philosophy, of the wealth and wonder, the subtlety and the mystery, the significance and the usefulness, of the present life in all its variegated manifestations. Even professedly religious literature is less theological than ethical; it purports to be a guide to this life rather than a finger-post to the eternal fatherland hereafter. Spenser, Shakespeare, Sidney, Bacon—how far do they illustrate Bishop Fulbert’s definition of the purpose of literature? And naturally, in England as elsewhere, the emancipation had been the work of scholars and men of letters who first learned the new wisdom in Italy and then returned home to permeate English thought with Italian ideas. The process by which this was accomplished is not marked by many dramatic episodes; it is the record

<sup>1</sup> *Reformation and Renaissance (circa 1377–1610)*, by J. M. Stone (London: Duckworth & Co., 1904). This work, although admittedly written “from the standpoint of the old religion,” is conspicuous for its broad sympathies and liberal judgments.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Map, appointed Archdeacon of Oxford 1196. Lowell, Essay on “Chaucer” in *My Study Windows* (Camelot Edition, p. 259). With reference to Map and the “Holy Grail” the *Encyclopædia Britannica* says (9th Ed., Vol. VIII. p. 408): “A cycle of romance, which till now had breathed only of revenge, slaughter, race-hatreds, unlawful love, magic, and witchcraft, becomes transformed in a few years into a series of mystical legends, symbolizing and teaching one of the profoundest dogmas of the Catholic creed.” Walter Map wrote in French.

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of long, slow, patient and continuous work, which is not much in men's thoughts to-day, but which no man has a right to forget who has read a Canto of the *Faerie Queene*, an Act of the *Merchant of Venice*, or a Book of *Paradise Lost*. From 1450 onwards there is a constant stream of scholars coming and going between Oxford and Padua and Bologna and Ferrara; men like Grey, Free, Flemming, Gunthorpe and Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who recognized that in Italy alone, and from Italian teachers, was it possible to see the literature of Greece and Rome in its true light, and to study that literature, not for the purpose of finding in it allegorical explanations of theology, but of applying its methods to the criticism of modern life, untrammelled by monastical scholasticism and theological pedantry. Before the end of the fifteenth century we find Linacre and Grocyn learning under Politian at Florence that *humanism* which they brought back to Oxford to inspire the work and mould the character of More and Colet, not to speak of Erasmus, who, although by birth a foreigner, was quite at home in English schools and English houses and English society in general. With More and Colet we attain the final triumph of humanism against scholasticism, or the pursuit of human or humane letters as against ecclesiastical. More was the great connecting link between university and court, and his task was to spread the atmosphere of the Renaissance among those aristocratical circles from which it had hitherto been absent.<sup>1</sup> The influence of the Italian Renaissance thus transferred to Elizabethan England was strengthened in many individual cases by personal knowledge of Italian culture gained at Italian universities and in the courts of Italian princes. But as a stream of literary inspiration it was, more or less, felt by every participant in English education.

It is always difficult to define literary phrases with mathematical accuracy; to make verbal distinctions which carry conviction with them as being precisely representative of the facts. And this difficulty exists

<sup>1</sup> For these details and a great many more see *The Italian Renaissance in England*, a scholarly and learned series of studies by Mr. Lewis Einstein (New York Press : The Columbia University, 1902).

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with special force when the material of definition is a literature so rich and splendid, and so overpowering in its complexity and many-sidedness, as English literature in the Age of Elizabeth. But, speaking under this sense of the final inadequacy of descriptive definitions in such a matter, it may conveniently be asserted that the effect of the Renaissance as a literary movement was felt in England in three main directions, the facts of which may be grouped under the three headings of Classical, Italian, and Romantic. If one tendency is described as specifically Italian it is for reasons which do not diminish the importance of Italian influence over the other two.

*Classical.*—As to the great popularity and influence of Greek and Latin literature at the time there can be no question. In the year 1570 Roger Ascham complained in his *Schoolmaster* that people made more account of an Essay by Cicero than they did of an Epistle by St. Paul, and, so far as educated people were concerned, there was truth in the charge.<sup>1</sup> Queen Elizabeth was not a religious woman—she was too much the pure Italian type of Prince for that—but she could read the New Testament in the original; could translate Sophocles and Demosthenes; could “rub up her musty Greek” to dispute points of scholarship with her bishops and courtiers.<sup>2</sup> Lady Jane Grey, the Duchess of Norfolk, the Countess of Arundel, and many other great ladies of the time, were quite at home in the Greek of Plato or Xenophon, or the naughty hexameters or hendecasyllables of Ovid or Catullus. For those who could not read the original there was a steady stream of translations. Even if a man had “small Latin and less Greek” he could not escape the current, and there is not an author who is not steeped in Classical history, poetry and philosophy, Shakespeare as much as Jonson, Spenser as much as Bacon, Marlowe as much as “Democritus Junior.” But the special significance of the study of Classical literature in those days was that it was no longer the pedantic trifling of monks and

<sup>1</sup> This is reminiscent of the true spirit of the Italian Renaissance, which drove a Cardinal from St. Paul's writings lest they should spoil his style!

<sup>2</sup> Green's *Short History*, p. 312.



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bookworms; but an earnest and eager investigation by masters of affairs, polished men of the world, who went to Greece and Rome for lessons of ethical and political wisdom, and not for material to write a commentary upon a particle, or a folio upon the fall of an accent. It was the study by living men of a living literature, the exciting and inspiring record of the deeds of men who had once lived themselves. In our own day we have studied Classical literature with greater closeness and finer textual accuracy, but we have not studied it with so keen a perception of its living value, until, perhaps, Prof. Gilbert Murray taught us the meaning of Euripides. To men who read the Classics in that spirit the cloistered ignorance of Mediævalism soon became a dream that vanishes at daybreak; and it is natural that already in the reign of Henry VII. the old scholasticism should have disappeared from our universities, scattered by the fresh breezes that blew from Italy. The transformation effected in the study of Classical literature by the Renaissance is a vivid example of the way in which a foreign atmosphere commingles with an established national tradition to produce an entire change of outlook and practice; to introduce, in fact, a new tradition to form part of the national achievement and be handed down as a national legacy.

*Italian.*—But the specifically Italian influence was no less marked than the Classical influence as coloured by Italian thought and emotion. Like all other countries of Europe, we accepted Machiavellianism as a finished system of political philosophy from Italy; and as on the political side it made force and craft the ruling principles of action, so on the social side it gave material interests priority over spiritual.

“ Assist us to accomplish all our ends,  
And sanctify whatever means we use  
To gain them——”<sup>1</sup>

was no less the prayer of Machiavelli's princes and politicians than it was of such ecclesiastics as the bishop who ordered his tomb in St. Praxed's Church. “The ideal to which all efforts were turning, on which all

<sup>1</sup> Sheridan's *The Critic*, Act II. sc. ii.

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thoughts depended, was the strong and happy man, possessing all the powers to accomplish all his wishes, and disposed to use them in pursuit of his happiness.”<sup>1</sup> This ideal stamped itself deeply upon the political and social life of Elizabethan England. Elizabeth herself, both as an individual and a monarch, was a child of the unchecked Italian Renaissance; and as she fed her individual tastes upon the poetry of Ariosto and Tasso, so she and her statesmen guided their actions upon the system of Machiavelli. The influence of Machiavellianism also coloured our literature—instance Bacon’s Essays and their many imitations. Bacon is even *plus quam* Machiavellian, as he extends to the sphere of private life principles and maxims which the Italian confined to politics.

But it was not only in this direction that specifically Italian influence was revived; Italian literature was generally studied both in the original and in translations. Gosson’s lengthy tirade against the literary, theatrical and musical abuses of his day particularly inveighs against the “wantonnesse” of Italy as one of the foreign elements that have undermined “the olde discipline of England.”<sup>2</sup> But, of course, there were other tendencies. Wyat and Surrey, having “tasted the sweet and stately manners and stile of the Italian poesie, greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar poesie.”<sup>3</sup> They introduced the Sonnet and the Blank Verse from Italy, innovations whose formative influence on the expression of imagination, intelligence, passion and philosophy by English poets can never be measured.

<sup>1</sup> Green’s *Short History*. Cf. *The Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, by the Rev. John Owen (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1893). “Hence, if Shakspeare is—to use a phrase of Jacobi’s—‘a Christian in heart, in intellect he is a Pagan’; and his Paganism has most of the attributes of the Renaissance product of the same name—a clear perception and forcible grasp of terrestrial realities and enjoyments, combined with a contemptuous ignoring of speculative truths, whether philosophical or theological,” p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> English Reprints. Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse*, 1579, etc., by Edward Arber (London: Alex. Murray & Son, March 1869). Large Paper Edition, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Puttenham, *Art of English Poesie* (1589), a passage quoted in every handbook of English literature.

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*Romantic.*—F. Schlegel wrote to his brother: "I cannot send you my explanation of 'Romantic' because it is 125 pages long"; and, indeed, it would have required many more pages than 125, and a much more lucid writer than the younger of the famous pair, to explain what the German "Romantic" was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, or even what the English "Romantic" was when the German atmosphere had commingled with our own.<sup>1</sup> But fortunately the problem is less obscure in the Elizabethan epoch, although not without its special difficulty and delicacy. While still shunning any tendency to mathematical precision in defining terms of literary history, we may say that the "Romantic" in the sixteenth century was a movement concerned with giving artistic expression to the old legends of the Arthurian type and to the world of "Faërie" in which they accomplished their imaginary careers. The fact that a good deal of this legendary lore can be traced to the Romanized "Celts" of Britain is probably responsible for the assertions of a number of critics that Shakespeare and the Elizabethans in general are marked by the possession of many "Celtic" qualities. Prof. Henry Morley in England and M. Augustin Filon in France maintain this view, and attribute it to an infiltration of Celtic blood into the veins of the Elizabethans, forgetting that the vices and virtues which they assign to the Celtic "race" are vices and virtues of which any son of man is capable, and which he exhibits if the environment evokes them. Enthusiasm and sensuality; irritability and gaiety; devotion to war, women, music; the absence of any Teutonic worrying about his fate in the universe; a vague instinct of revolt and irreligion; no return to Faith by peaceful contemplation of the works of God—these are the qualities of the "Celtic race." Moreover, without Latin education or Saxon guidance, the Celt is incapable of self-control or self-perfection.<sup>2</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> *A History of German Literature*, by Calvin Thomas, LL.D. (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1909), p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, par Augustin Filon (Hachette, 1905), p. 12. See also *A First Sketch of English Literature*, by Henry Morley (Cassell & Co., 1890), p. 8. Prof. Morley says: "Influence of



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these qualities are human qualities; they belong to no race as such; but of any race some members possess them, or some of them, while others do not possess all of them, and may not possess any of them. We are again inevitably driven to continuity of tradition, and not to continuity of racial descent, to explain continuity of qualities. If the Elizabethans exhibit any qualities in a specially Celtic form, it must be due either to the fact that they were educated in parts of the country where a Celtic population had been in continuous occupation and had handed down their traditional habits in the usual way; or else to the fact that a stream of Celtic influence had poured into their national atmosphere from another source. But of the former there is no evidence. The great stream of Celtic influence in Elizabeth's time is supposed to be formed of the ideas and qualities introduced in the Arthurian and similar legends. But there is no record of any continuous existence of this tradition and tendency in England itself. There may have been legends recorded generation after generation in particular families; but speaking of the people as a whole, they made acquaintance with the legends and tales of Arthurian chivalry and "Faërie" from foreign sources. Admitting, as we may with probability, but not with certainty, that the Arthurian legends found their way from Britain into Brittany with British refugees from Saxon pirates and settlers, it is certain that they only reached England again in a literary form from Normandy. The development of this literature into the full splendour of chivalry was the work of the Normans, and not of the Celtic Britons at all. Whether the subject is Arthur, son of Pendragon, and the Knights of the Round Table, Merlin,

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the Celt on English literature proceeds not from example set by one people and followed by another, but in the way of nature, by establishment of blood relationship, and the transmission of modified and blended character to a succeeding generation."—This theory recalls the way of the Ulster men (mentioned by Morley on p. 11), who "mixed the brains of their slain enemies with lime and played with the hard balls they made of them. Such a brainstone is said to have gone through the skull of Conchobar, who lived afterwards seven years with two brains in his head, always sitting very still, because it would be death to shake himself"!

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Tristram, Lancelot, Galahad and Percival; whether the hero is Amadis of Gaul, Amadis of Scotland, or Amadis of Greece; Florismart of Hyrcania, Galaor, Florestan, or Esplandian; or whether Charlemagne and his Paladins are the theme of song or tale; whether Normandy or France or Spain or England, or some quaintly concocted mixture of geographical districts known, guessed at, or imagined, is the scene of the fabulous history: the atmosphere which enwraps them is unlike anything ever before known in England, and such influence as they had upon the development of the English character cannot possibly be assigned to the originality of the native genius. But that the qualities of character lauded and exemplified in them were readily admitted into the native tradition cannot be doubted by those who reflect on the wide and lasting popularity obtained by these productions in England. Even in the fourteenth century an interesting attempt was made to wed this new atmosphere of Romance and Chivalry to the old Saxon poetic forms; and in the story of *Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight* the metre of *Beowulf* is made resplendent with the names of Camelot, and Agravaine, and Arthur, and Guenevere herself—

“The most kyd knyghtes under Kryste selven,  
And the lovelokkest ladies that ever lif haden,  
And he the comlokest Kyng that the Court haldis.”<sup>1</sup>

But this was an experiment out of the main current of our literary development, and when Chaucer had combined the French and Italian traditions with the native English, a full appeal could only be made to the nation by those who accepted the tradition as he established it. It was with Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, printed by Caxton in 1485, that the romantic and chivalrous tradition began to make that general appeal which it still makes to-day. It was from this time onwards that there was placed before the public eye an ideal of manly conduct which differed from the ideal of *Beowulf* not so much by opposition as by amplification and addition. Courtesy to friends was extended into chivalry

<sup>1</sup> “*Sir Gawayn and the Green Knight*,” from the *Oxford Treasury of English Literature* (1906), p. 58.

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to foes; pride in great personal achievements rested rather upon modest consciousness of worth than upon insistent demands for its public recognition; respect towards woman is tinged with a tender delicacy which extends even to the sinner in virtue of her womanhood; and, above all, we have that conception of "honour" which, undefinable as it is in other words, has lasted unchanged in meaning for several centuries. These and other qualities were no gift of the "Anglo-Saxon blood"; they were the common possession of all the legends and tales of chivalry; and whatever was their origin, whether in the actual deeds of certain Christian knights, or in the European adoption of Arabian modes of thought and emotion, they furnish a new stream of literary and ethical inspiration to all the nations of Europe, whatever races constitute them. These qualities naturally assumed different forms in the different countries of their adoption; but the differences do not correspond with differences of racial origin. The extent to which and the manner in which new qualities are embodied in a national tradition depend upon the method of their presentment to the people, and upon the readiness of the old tradition to accept the newer ideas; and this is the reason that the notions of chivalry found a different reception and a different expression in every different country. The Celtic *Peredur*, the Norman *Percival*, the German *Parzival*, three profoundly different national reproductions of the same story, are explicable, not by differences of race—which probably do not exist—but by differences in the mental and emotional condition to which their previous experiences had brought the separate peoples, and by the manner in which the tellers of the story—the *Chrétien de Troyes* and the *Wolfram von Eschenbachs*—dress up the incidents for the audience to which they appeal. In England, at any rate, the national tradition and the national character were greatly modified by the introduction of the qualities of the chivalrous ideal; and the effect is a matter of pure historical experience which excludes the fantastic play of any racial hypothesis whatever.

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<sup>1</sup> *A History of Italian Literature*, by Richard Garnett, C.B., LL.D. (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1898), p. 129.

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native Chaucerian tradition, we now turn for brief consideration.

The significance of Spenser as a national poet consists in the fact that he harmonizes and unifies all the various influences operating upon his period into a finished artistic form, which makes a special appeal to Englishmen, not only because it uses their language, but also because it is instinct with patriotic and other sympathies which spring out of their common interest in a certain sphere of ideas, emotions and experiences. Like Chaucer, admittedly his teacher and inspirer in many respects, he presents his foreign material in such a manner as to make it part of the national possession, and thus combines it with the existing national tradition, in order to make a fuller and richer legacy for his national successors. It is quite possible to imagine a poet—perhaps Shakespeare was such a one—dowered by Nature, in her infinite capacity for individual differentiation, with a mind so flexible and many-sided as to evolve greatness out of any environment. It may be true, as Mr. J. M. Robertson says, that "Æschylus in Egypt and Aristophanes in Persia must have died with all their drama in them";<sup>1</sup> but it may also be true that the native force and subtlety which expressed themselves in tragedy and comedy in the drama-nurturing atmosphere of Athens might have been directed to ends of equal grandeur in Memphis and Babylon. Shakespeare himself, although in such intimate sympathy with his immediate environment that he "Londonizes his Romans," always suggests the impression that he uses the currents, tendencies and influences of his time as mere accidental illustrations of his thought; that any other civilization would have given him others equally serviceable and equally submissive to his triumphant egotism. He seems to dominate his environment, and to regard the great age and country in which he lived as a tiny corner in the world of experience imaged in his brain. But with Spenser the case is different. It is not easy to imagine Spenser vocal or active at all, except as an Elizabethan. All the tendencies, literary, social and political, of his

<sup>1</sup> Robertson, *Evolution of States*, p. 127.

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age and country are not merely reflected in him, but he actually seems as much wielded by them as they are wielded by him. Spenser, from this point of view, must be regarded, rather than Shakespeare, as the typical and characteristic genius of the Elizabethan Age. Shakespeare seems only accidentally an Elizabethan; but the Elizabethan Age is of the very essence of Spenser's artistic productiveness.

If this be so, we shall expect to find defined with perfect clearness in his creations all those tendencies which we have seen operating upon the national atmosphere into which he was born. And we shall also see that, notwithstanding the clearness of the separate elements, he has learned the art of commingling them into the unity of a finished and unique production.

So far as concerns the literature of Greece and Rome, it is quite impossible to deny the spell which was exercised upon Spenser. The student of Homer and Virgil is constantly coming across passages which copy, even translate, well-known lines from the two great Classical epic poets. Apart from direct imitations and translations, every Classical scholar will feel, as in the parallel case of Tennyson, that a goodly portion of the pleasure of reading the poet consists in the innumerable examples of subtle allusiveness to the poetical writings of the Classical authors. An atmosphere is suggested which cannot be described; the poet does not describe it; but the Classical scholar knows it is an atmosphere which belongs to Greek skies or Sicilian landscapes. Even his grammatical constructions are often imitations of Greek and Latin constructions: he wrote excellent Latin verse himself: and it is only by a sort of divine accident that we escaped having the *Faerie Queene* in English hexameters, a contingency which we can only shudder at when we recall such English hexameters as—

"Hedgerows hott doo, resound with grasshops mournfully squeaking."<sup>1</sup>

But if Spenser repudiated a Classical verse form for his great poem, he was under the spell of Classical models in other spheres of influence. Already while

<sup>1</sup> *The Later Renaissance*, by David Hannay (Wm. Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1898), p. 187.

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at Cambridge he was remarkable for his study of Greek philosophy. That he was steeped in Platonism is evidenced by innumerable passages of philosophic idealism in the *Faerie Queene*, as well as by his *Four Hymns on Love and Beauty*, especially the two dedicated to "Heavenly Love," and "Heavenly Beauty," which are inspired equally by Platonism and Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

To Aristotle his indebtedness is as significant, if not so subtle and all-pervasive of the substance of his work. His object in writing the *Faerie Queene* is expressed very clearly in the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh which appears at the end of the first edition of the first three books, published in the year 1590.<sup>2</sup> The wonderful texture of imaginative beauty which he hopes to weave; the romantic wealth of adventure which he hopes to enjoy; the marvel and the mystery of the fancied worlds he hopes to visit in his song—it almost appears from the Raleigh letter as if he regards all these merely as so much setting for the Pagan virtues described and illustrated in that famous moral work, *The Ethics* of Aristotle. Pagan virtues taking the shape of heroes of chivalry; the twelve virtues of Aristotle masquerading as twelve knights of the Arthurian tradition: could anything be more significant of the formation of literary tendencies by the commingling of atmospheres? The result is something quite new and distinctive. It is neither Classical nor Romantic; but Spenserian and English. In adorning these Pagan qualities with Christian and chivalric accoutrements he is inspired by all the Romance of England and Italy; taking all that either Malory can give him at home, or Ariosto and Tasso abroad. From the two latter, his favourite Italian poets, style is copied, passages are translated, characters borrowed. Besides, the voluptuousness with which Spenser describes the beauty of external objects, the charms of physical things; the dreaming, Lotus-eating sweetness of his versification; the seductions which the poet lends to wickedness,

<sup>1</sup> *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, by the Rev. George Gilfillan and Charles Cowden Clarke, Library Edition in five volumes (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1862), Vol. V. pp. 283-324.

<sup>2</sup> The Raleigh letter is given in Vol. I. of the Gilfillan and Cowden Clarke edition, next before the *Faerie Queene*.



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almost tempting the chaste to be naughty through sheer love of the graces of its description—all this shows in the most dominating manner the influence of that love of beauty which is the characteristic note of the pure Italian Renaissance, and which is not less conspicuous in Spenser than it is in Ariosto himself.

The Romantic strain in Spenser, therefore, is originally drawn from the old familiar British sources known to Malory from the Norman renderings, but amplified and enriched, invigorated and sweetened, by the delightful creations of the Italian poets of Romance and Fantasy.

But even than all this there is something more in Spenser. The first hero of the *Faerie Queene* is the *Red Cross Knight*, the representative of Christian Holiness, the untiring participator in that pursuit of Goodness which was especially re-inspired by the Reformation in its revolt against the excessive devotion to Beauty and Pleasure characterizing the Renaissance in Italy.

And in Spenser both these influences are harmoniously combined. He expresses the keen sense of honour of the knights of Chivalry; the intellectual dignity of the highest Classical philosophers; the exquisite enjoyment of natural beauty born of, or inspired by, the Renaissance. But he is more than these. In him, that something in the English character which responds readily to virtuous appeals was attracted to the severer forms of morality which were associated with the Calvinists who found their inspiration in Geneva. In religion, Spenser was a Calvinistic Protestant, that is, a Puritan, and he had that deep sense of religion which characterized the Puritans. Physical beauty has been described by no poet with more exquisite sense of enjoyment than by him; moral beauty, goodness, has no more eloquent or convinced worshipper than he is. As M. Taine remarks: "We here touch the sublime sharp summit where the world of mind and the world of sense unite; where man, gathering with both hands the loveliest flowers of either, feels himself at the same time a pagan and a Christian."<sup>1</sup> Spenser thus hands down to posterity the love of goodness embellished and inspired by the love of beauty. He moves about in a world of wonder, magic and enchantment, but his guide

<sup>1</sup> Taine, *English Literature*, Vol. I. p. 292.

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is ever the spirit of Christian goodness in its severest and chastest shape. He draws a gallery of gallant knightly portraits, but he embellishes them with every virtue inspired by Greek Philosophy, every sort of goodness taught by the Christian Religion. He is open and receptive to all the influences of his age, native and foreign, and his chief historical, as apart from his artistic, value is that he exhibits as in a mirror the character of the England of his days—the England out of which was to spring, in due season, the Puritan revival, with all that that meant in political, social and literary life; the Restoration reaction, with its lessons of the danger of abandonment to the sole pursuit of pleasure; and finally, the literature and social life of our own time, in which one sees clearly that the exquisite Spenserian love of beauty is as living as ever, while at the same time it is held in restraint by a conception of moral beauty which is not greatly different from that of Spenser himself.

In Spenser we have thus an example of that comingling of atmospheres which has been the constantly operating cause of all our literary progress. Foreign traditions are received into our own national environment, which is strengthened and enriched to form a more invigorating and inspiring atmosphere for the generations who occupy the succeeding stages of our national history.

And so the process continues: the national tradition is perpetuated because each generation is educated in the tradition of its predecessor or predecessors; it is varied because each generation, besides combining in different forms the legacy of its ancestors, admits into its atmosphere influences and traditions from external sources. But the more it changes, the more it remains the same, because the new material is looked at with eyes educated by the old, and must, therefore, be judged mainly from the point of view presented by the old. But there is a continual intermingling of intellectual, moral and social traditions, and so far from the Englishman being limited to the expression of certain "racial" qualities, he shows himself increasingly capable of receiving, nurturing and practising qualities supposed to be the special endowment of other "races."

It is remarkable, though not often remarked, what

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strange foreign ways of thought, emotion and expression have found their way into our national atmosphere, to receive a permanent welcome and to form part of the legacy of all succeeding generations. English authors never learned at home the art of concealing poverty of thought under that careful balance of phrasing which is so elaborate as to deceive even the wary into thinking that all this trouble cannot have been taken for nothing. The trick of treating a peppercorn of meaning as if it were a message for the salvation of humanity was never English until Lyly learnt it from the Spaniard Guevara. This and the allied Spanish affectation of adorning trivial ideas with fantastic and far-fetched imagery—the two becoming highly developed in Spain at the end of the sixteenth century under the influence of Gongora, Ledesma and Quevedo, and in Italy under that of Marino—found a refuge in our English tradition, from which they have never been entirely eradicated, although they have never been so marked a feature of our literary life as in the early seventeenth century, when Donne, Crashaw, Quarles, Herbert, Vaughan, and even Herrick himself, not to speak of Cowley, were apt pupils in this style, of which Milton happily only gives us a single example in his lines on "Hobson the Carrier."

But if the poison of this "metaphysical" tendency came from Spain, Spain also supplied the antidote in a form of literary composition working in close touch with the realism of the lower strata of society. What the English tradition owes to the Picaresque novel, to the Romance of Roguery, is not in doubt and needs no emphasis. It has given us Aphra Behn, De Foe, Fielding, Smollett and all the realists down to George Moore and Thomas Hardy.

From Spain, also, commencing with Caxton's impression of the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (much of which was taken from a book which had recently been translated from the Spanish by Lord Rivers), down to the *Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius* translated by Lord Berners in 1534 from a French version of the Spanish original of Guevara, Bishop of Moncedo, a stream of influence was felt which was exhibited on the literary side in such works as Bacon's *Apophthegms*, Burleigh's *Maxims*, Sir Walter Raleigh's



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*Maxims of State*, Sir Francis Walsingham's *Legacy*, all of them more or less valuable compendiums of those sententious observations which summarize in terse and weighty phrases the general experience of humanity on the most important phases of life. On the side of practice, that gravity in face of the serious issues of conduct which is now a highly developed trait in our national character was undoubtedly stimulated and formed by this foreign influence, which has become strongly entrenched in the national literary, social and political tradition.

To multiply further examples of his thesis would be as easy for the writer as tedious to the reader, who must be referred to the previous pages as illustrating and establishing the view that literature has no racial origin and no racial growth, although it has emphatically a national origin and a national growth. The position would only be corroborated by details of the development of our literature from the days of Queen Elizabeth to those of King George. It is manifest that the same method can be applied and that similar results will be established, with a constant growth of national integrity in literature as the national tradition in its native and nationalized elements makes a wider appeal to a more generally and more highly educated nation. All our great writers have either dealt with material in which Englishmen as such have felt a common interest, or have dealt with foreign material in such a manner as to give it a common interest to Englishmen as such by harmonizing it with the existing English tradition; the added material being thus combined with the original material to form the common possession of Englishmen of the next and succeeding generations. It is the old story of the basis of nationality being fixed in the growth of an organic community of common interest, the common interest becoming wider as the nations pour their streams of influence in upon our native ways.

The existing English tradition, the atmosphere in which they are educated as Englishmen—this conditions all the work of the new men; and, bold and original as they may be, they perpetuate and pass it on to their successors, with whatever additions and improvements

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they are capable of. But some elements of the tradition are continuous, and Shaw himself cannot help Shakespeareanizing; Mr. Robertson derives from Hume and the eighteenth-century Rationalists; and Mr. Zangwill from Richardson and Smollett. Just as organic continuity of common interest is the basis and the explanation of nationality, so literature, which expresses this continuity, necessarily becomes national. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, Watson, Kipling, are torchbearers in one Lucretian procession—all share in the English tradition—all are national poets; they are ours in a sense in which Dante and Goethe and Victor Hugo can never be.

It is possible that we too readily admit the claim made by German critics that Shakespeare is theirs even more than ours. At any rate, the writer cannot repudiate the thrill of quiet satisfaction which he felt at reading the way in which the great German writer, Grillparzer, disposes of this claim. He quotes from Gervinus, the historian of German poetry: "The English have left it to the Germans to do full justice to Shakespeare." Grillparzer's comment on this is merely "Good God!"—and it quite adequate.<sup>1</sup> But even if the claim were true it does not remove Shakespeare from his place in the English national tradition. Carlyle probably understood Goethe better than most Germans; but that does not make Goethe an Englishman, and Shakespeare remains English in spite of German admiration. The English literary tradition is a different thing from the German literary tradition; both are different from the French, the Spanish, or the Italian; and the writer cannot imagine—at any rate, he cannot find—a truer or a clearer description of these separate traditions than to call them national. Literature is the artistic expression of the process of social growth and development in a community which is broadly interested in the same things. It is not only a criticism of life, as Arnold called it; it is also life itself; and it is the national life, therefore, which naturally expresses itself in national literature. And national literature is always in close and intimate

<sup>1</sup> Grillparzer, Cotta Edition, Vol. XVIII. p. 24.

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touch with the spirit of the social group, embodying its thoughts and appealing to its sympathies. Literature, once and again, is the reproduction of national life in artistic form. Take Goethe, Schiller, Molière, Voltaire, Cervantes, Dante; put them into more idiomatic English than they have ever yet enjoyed; and they are still German, French, Italian, Spanish; they derive from certain special traditions and associations which flourished in their respective countries, traditions and associations which could not have existed except in communities with an environment specially favourable to their production. Put Carlyle into German—that is, those parts of him which were not written in German—and he is still English—or Scotch.

It will be seen that this view allows both for that community of domestic interest which is called nationality and for that community of domestic and foreign interests which is called internationalism. It recognizes quite clearly that there are certain things which as Englishmen we are compelled to take an interest in; but it recognizes with equal clearness that we owe a great part of our national development to sympathetic contact with other nations. The history of English literature is continuously the history of its expansion and enrichment by foreign influences, both social and literary. To quote A. W. Schlegel: "Poetry as the fervent expression of our whole being must assume new and peculiar forms in different ages,"<sup>1</sup> and with us the assumption of new forms has been largely conditioned by external forces. As it would be impossible to exclude Dante and Petrarch from a history of Mediæval English literature; as it would be impossible to exclude Virgil and Horace from a history of Puritan and Georgian literature; so it would be impossible to exclude Ibsen, Zola and Maeterlinck from a history of present English literature. From that point of view literature, while it cannot help being national as expressing community of feeling and interest in the national group, equally cannot help exhibiting a sympathetic receptivity towards the external stimuli that beat upon it.

<sup>1</sup> *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, by Augustus William Schlegel, translated by John Black (London: Baldwin, Cradock & Joy, 1815). See Vol. I. p. 49.



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But the nations are not united yet; the sphere of their separate interests is broader than the sphere of their common interests. The principle of nationality dominates the sentiment of international sympathy. Since the failure of the Catholic Church to found a universal City of God on political lines the development of Europe has been on a national basis, even more so after the French Revolution with its ideal of cosmopolitan brotherhood than before. If we are to rob that principle of some of its powers for mischief, and to emphasize its influence for good, the line of progress would appear to be, not in the cultivation of a vague humanitarian sentiment, but in accepting our own Matthew Arnold's practical invitation to "regard Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result."<sup>1</sup> A "confederation," he says, and he who always chose his words for their precision and lucidity meant by a confederation a group of separate nationalities each obeying its own laws, each working out its own salvation in the sphere of its separate communal interests, but each stretching out for knowledge and sympathy to its fellows in the final hope, not of annihilating nationality, but of using all its tremendous powers for the enhancement of the common international good. This line of progress would be directed by a recognition of the facts of history, which show how different communities have been united into one homogeneous whole by the operation of influences which have limited the spheres of their hostile interests and extended the spheres of their common interests. The application of this principle of history to some practical problems of our present national and international life is a task the writer reserves for the two following chapters.

<sup>1</sup> Essay on "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," in *Essays on Criticism*. (The New Universal Library: George Routledge & Sons), p. 34.

## CHAPTER XIV

Nationality and the War—Patriotism as Emotion and Intelligence; as Passion and as Thought—Its intellectual Aspect more pronounced with the Spread of Education, and with the Progress of the War—Nationality after the War—"Remaking the Map of Europe" from the Point of View of Nationality—Organic Continuity of common Interest the necessary Test of Nationality in post-war Readjustments—The Principle of Nationality more vital after the War than before it—Nationality as the Cause of War—The Views of the Anti-National Pacifists: (1) That Nationality is the Cause of War, (2) That Peace can be secured only by the Elimination of Nationality, either (a) through the Rise of a World-Power, or (b) by the Spread of Cosmopolitanism—These Views examined and refuted.

"THUS from the bosom of variety, enmity and war, has arisen in modern Europe that national unity which is so striking in the present day, and which tends to develop and refine itself from day to day with still greater brilliance."<sup>1</sup> These words of Guizot, spoken nearly a century ago, were profound and true equally as a record and a prediction. The prediction, indeed, which is that of a detached philosopher coldly reasoning from historical premises, has acquired a truth that is almost terrible to us who have but recently witnessed the utter destruction of so many individual hopes, the annihilation of so many plans of social and political amelioration, willingly offered up to that sacred cause of nationality whose call is more appealing, whose charm is more alluring, whose blessings are more highly appreciated, than at any previous period of European history. Particularist tendencies at home are suspended or harmonized; organizations which have played with the notion that Religion or Industry, or participation in the common work of civilization, could be utilized to inspire a non-national, or an anti-national propa-

<sup>1</sup> Guizot, *History of European Civilization*, translated by W. Hazlitt, Vol. I. p. 138 (D. Bogue, 1846, The "Bohn" Series).

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ganda, find that their efforts have been directed by national ideals, as they owe their existence to national traditions. Finance discovers that it is no longer international. Socialism prefers to fight out its battle with Capitalism without foreign hindrance or aid; Religion and Freethought alike recognize that they are National Religion and National Freethought.

It was one of Mr. Norman Angell's Pacifist arguments in the days before the war that "the nation which should use its military power to destroy the religious, political or social belief of some other nation would certainly be entering into a war against an identical belief held by groups within its own community."<sup>1</sup> The word "identical" here begs the whole question at issue. The beliefs cannot be identical in any real sense; they are shaped and coloured and developed and directed by the national culture in which they individually flourish. Christianity in England is English Christianity, with a national history behind it and a national ideal in front of it. Socialism in England is English Socialism, coloured by English culture and aiming at the solution of English problems by English methods. These so-called "identical" religious and social beliefs prove, on examination, to be fundamentally different expressions of national idealism. It is clear to the Christian and the Socialist of England that our national ideals must be preserved even if German Christianity and International Socialism perish for ever. When the continuity of the national tradition is threatened, Dr. Clifford and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Robert Blatchford and Lord Salisbury, unite with equal passion in its defence; whilst abroad the Jesuits of Munich fulminate against the Jesuits of Brussels and Cardinal Mercier is as patriotic as M. Max.

Like all the great principles which have dominated in the development of human institutions and habits, patriotism has its sources both in passion and in reason; it shares alike in enthusiasm and intelligence. In other manifestations of the devotion aroused by an inspiring cause, we commonly find that the enthusiasm of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Foundations of International Policy*, by Norman Angell (Wm. Heinemann, 1914). "Introductory Summary," pp. 26-7.



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many has been guided by the intelligence of the few; the passion of the crowd directed, if not evoked, by the judgment of their leaders. In the mob passion has been the motive power, and only in the rarest cases have even the leaders felt in themselves the emotions which they directed in others. Frequently, too, the general fervour originally actuating the crusade has been dissipated in a coldly rational formalism which has turned the old battle-cries into dry codes of law or theology; the passion which dominates in one period is displaced by a too-sickly thoughtfulness in another. But in the case of patriotism, the more general prevalence of even a narrow and halting education among the popular masses of the civilized communities is gradually producing a conception of nationality in which passion and intelligence, emotion and culture, are not separated from each other, either as belonging to different periods in the development of the conception, or by differences of individual character in those who maintain it: the elements of reason and sentiment are in process of being harmoniously co-ordinated in the mind and heart of every true patriot.

We have already sufficiently emphasized the view that the growth of nationality is due to the mutual action and interaction of the communal environment and the minds of the individual persons who are within the sphere of its influence. We have seen how great and representative personalities have guided the events and circumstances of their environment to the accomplishment of national ends; how they have contributed by conscious and deliberate action to the creation of that national tradition in whose establishment the majority of the people have, perhaps unconsciously, participated. But with the spread of education and the consequent wider knowledge of national history the number of those who have consciously and intelligently studied the evolution of the national ideal constantly increases, and the number of those in whom patriotism is a mere matter of unconscious sympathy with their social and physical surroundings constantly decreases. This is a fact which is pregnant with great national possibilities for the future, as it multiplies the

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minds that can consciously co-operate in the shaping of national ideals. But perhaps its main importance to us at present is that it strengthens the intellectual element in the nationalistic conception and enables the ardent patriot to give historical reasons for the faith that is in him. He sees clearly and consciously that, as a pure matter of historical fact, he owes all that he is and has, not to his racial descent, but to his inheritance of a national culture and tradition. His knowledge, his emotion and his action are perceived to have no meaning, hardly an existence, except as related to the tradition which has produced and nourished him. If he could conceive of himself apart from his nationality it would only be as an aimless object, moving about in worlds not realized. He is at once the creature and the creator of a tradition. Even the spiritual approaches he makes to foreign nations are conditioned by the national tradition of which he forms a part. One cannot, for example, read a word of Lord Haldane's without perceiving that his statement that Germany was his spiritual home, if ever he made the statement, could never have been true in any substantial sense; that it must have been a mere piece of exaggerated international politeness; that he has read Kant and Schopenhauer as an Englishman and not as a German. We Englishmen must always understand Goethe or Schiller as Englishmen, just as the Germans make of Shakespeare what, as Germans, they can. They cannot see Shakespeare as Englishmen can see him; they see him through the atmosphere of their own literary tradition and social culture. It is not "our Shakespeare" they know, it is "unser Shakespeare"—a Shakespeare remade in Germany out of English material.

Little as one may be inclined to use the Great War to point the moral of a student's essay, there can be no doubt that we should conclude from some indisputable aspects of the conflict that the tendency to suffuse patriotism with intelligence has recently received a strong impulse. It becomes increasingly manifest that the struggle has been a combat between different national traditions whose comparative value to humanity can be investigated and discussed from the standpoint

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of reason. It may be admitted that upon the outbreak of the war British patriotism, as was, perhaps, natural considering the sudden nature of the shock, appeared to be dominated by emotional rather than by purely rational considerations, so far as concerned the great mass of the community, and to exhibit most conspicuously "that intuitive instinctive quality" which Mr. Norman Angell seems to regard as the only characteristic of patriotism.<sup>1</sup> From that thrilling moment when we became conscious that the national ideals of the European States, so far from co-operating towards the peaceful permeation of the world with what was best in each of them, were to fight out their conflicting claims in the old crude way of war—from that moment the whole community was seized with a passionate fervour of devotion which can only be compared, for the intensity of its ardour, with a religious revival. And this was the case, not only with those who had almost glaring cause to be grateful to the national tradition, but it was conspicuously so with many people who had spent the greater part of their lives as critics and opponents of social and economic conditions in this country. But when the war came, these people—some of them having reached the stage of doubting the value of British nationality, others, while not denying its value, speaking chiefly of its imperfections and failures—found all at once that nationality was an inspired and inspiring gospel which, almost blinding them with its transfiguring light, turned doubt to devotion and criticism to passionate self-surrender.

To those, however, who looked beneath the surface of this current of patriotic emotion, or who watched its progress after a short interval of time, it seemed equally clear that sentiment and enthusiasm did not exhaust the whole of its meaning and contents; that a reasoned recognition of the surpassing worth of the British tradition had an equal share in creating it and directing it, giving it that constant and sustaining force which mere emotion never inspires. The national education, imperfect and foolish in many respects, had

<sup>1</sup> *War and the Essential Realities*, by Norman Angell (Conway Memorial Lecture, 1913. Watts & Co.), *passim*.



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not been without influence in showing the community, even those members of it who were least satisfied with its social and economic structure, that everything they possessed in life was the gift of their nationality; that even criticism and opposition were national rights, conditioned by national circumstances, directed by national motives, and aiming at the realization of national ideals. Reason, recognizing the value of the national tradition, and emotion, flushing with a sudden gratitude for what the national tradition had already accomplished, were fused into an ardent determination to use the international crisis for the purpose of directing our national ideals towards greater aims and nobler destinies than ever.

And as the war progressed it became indubitably clear that a reasoned conception of the value of our national culture lay at the basis of our action in the crisis. It is beginning to be definitely understood that nationality always represents a specific form of culture and character, easily recognizable as distinct from the culture and character of other nationalities. The growth of nationality can be studied by the ordinary methods of historical research; the differences of culture and tradition represented by different nationalities are seen to have their origins and causes in the facts of their separate national histories; the culture and character of a people are found to be the result of the experiences through which it has passed; and, as no two nationalities have passed through anything like the same experiences, it follows that no two nationalities exhibit the same character or represent the same culture. No one could contend that British and German ideals of character and culture are identical, related as the two peoples are to each other in religion and language and in the common possession of the Græco-Roman civilization. There never was a moment when the ideals and traditions of the German peoples were identical with ours, since the moment when German tribes came over the North Sea and laid the broad foundations of our English culture and character 1500 years ago. There have, however, been moments when the two nations could co-operate sympathetically in the common work

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of civilization; in common scientific, artistic and literary occupations and projects. But during the last century, especially the latter half of it, Germany has passed through experiences, springing from her social and political environment and from the action of the personalities who have consciously or unconsciously directed the facts of that environment, which have made her cultural ideals totally incompatible with those that prevail on this side of the North Sea. Bismarck's uncompromising application of the policy of Machiavelli and that old German hero Reineke Fuchs to the sphere of international politics; his insistence upon the principle of self-interest as the only guide of State policy; the success of his policy in the cases of Denmark, Austria and France; the unparalleled extension of German industrialism as a factor in her domestic evolution and in her political relations with other industrial States; the fantastic racial theories of Chamberlain which claim universal supremacy for the German people on the ground of some entirely illusory quality in their blood, and which have been systematically instilled into the minds of all the younger generation of Germans—these special experiences have caused the German tradition and culture to become, not hostile only to those of Great Britain but to those of civilized nations in general. But emphasized as the differences have recently become, it will not be imagined that they are purely the outcome of yesterday's events. It is true that every generation of a nation's history brings with it newer experiences, a more complicated and elaborate environment, more, and different, individual minds to be affected by the environment and to affect it in turn; but the character and culture of a nation at any moment are the result of all the experiences through which it has passed since the beginnings of its history. It is impossible to separate generation from generation. Every generation inherits the tradition and culture of its predecessors; we are all educated in the atmosphere of our childhood; we learn what our fathers have taught us; we take up the national tradition of accomplishment and hope where they left it; we mould it to the extent of our individual capacities and social opportunities;

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we alter it, enrich it, strengthen it; but we never annihilate it: we hand it down to our children, our successors, to deal with it and be dealt with by it in their turn. But there is a strain of continuity running through all the changes; and we later Englishmen are justified in recognizing a kinship with Alfred the Great and Jack Cade and Chaucer the Poet that we do not recognize with Haeckel and Eucken, although the latter belong to our own generation, have endowed us with many spiritual gifts and graces, and are probably in blood as near akin to us as our own "ancestors."

The conscious and intelligent recognition that nationality is not an hallucination; that it has no objective basis in differences of race; that it is in every case the expression of a distinct culture, a separate historical tradition: these points emerge with something of a terrible lucidity from recent European history. But particularly the last point. It is strikingly manifest that the various nationalities of Europe are intellectually and morally conscious that, in spite of complicated relationships with each other, relationships of Trade, Finance, Religion, Art, Science and the rest, they are endowed by the forces of their past histories with definite and characteristic desires and necessities; that they have separate missions to accomplish, not only for themselves but for the world at large. And this fact is most tragically conspicuous in the case of Germany, for whom the claim has been made, by the most representative exponents of her national views, that her culture, her tradition, her character, her mission, are so super-excellent that they must, for the world's good, be forced upon the world at the point of the sword. Mr. Norman Angell said a few years ago: "I am not aware that any one has yet argued that foreign nations are going to attack us from altruistic motives—for our own good."<sup>1</sup> And, indeed, it seemed an excellent jest at the time; but the jest has lost something of its savour now that we have seen a people so enamoured of their own culture as to be convinced that the world's salvation depended upon it being Germanized, and that the attainment of this holy end

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of International Polity*, p. 10.



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would justify any means calculated to effect it. This, however, is the very anti-climax of nationality, a crucial example of the principle *corruptio optimi pessima*.

But this exaggeration of the national principle serves to emphasize its reality. The German aberration is due to the fact that the people of that country have so thoroughly imbibed the foolish teachings of Chamberlain and the rest as to their racial superiority, with its fantastic corollary of universal empire as their inevitable racial destiny. To assume this attitude is to eliminate intelligent choice from human affairs and to hand them over again to the Norns and the Wyrds. It would give the great and desired reward of world-power to the Germans, not because their historical development has made them worthy of it, but because they are fated to it. Had they not deliberately shut their eyes to the results of their studies in the history of their own country, they would have admitted that the development of their Imperial Nationality has been favoured or retarded, not by the blind impulsion of a racial fate, not by the "purity" or "impurity" of their blood, but by the action of personalities whose appearance was very much a matter of accident, and whose policies were inspired and guided by their social environment. Substantially the racial composition of the German people is what it was when the states which are now united in one nationality were separated into more or less loosely allied Kingdoms and Duchies and Palatinates and Free Towns, with all sorts of particularist and disruptive tendencies. That these discrepant units became welded into one harmonious scheme was due to causes broadly similar to those which operated in the production of British nationality. German nationality is due to the pressure of circumstances and to the action of personalities in diminishing the spheres of the hostile interests of the different elements and in increasing and at last identifying the spheres of their friendly interests; and this, in their case as in our own, notwithstanding the vast differences of racial origin represented by the population.

The elimination of race as an objective factor in national development and the recognition that nation-

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ality is due to the natural operation of circumstances and the use made of them by the human intelligence at once removes the workings of the national spirit from the control of ineluctable Fate, and places it still more directly than before under the control of the national intelligence. It becomes evident that nations, like their individual citizens, possess the power of intelligent choice, a consideration which immediately brings national policies into the sphere of Moral Law. Just as a man who has the power of choice acts upon the social and, therefore, the moral principle that he must not exercise that power to the detriment of his fellow-citizens; so a nation, however strong and superabundant her consciousness of vitality, must not, having the power of choice, use her power to the detriment of other nationalities. It is a perception of this fact, forgotten by Germany, which actuates the nations who arrayed themselves against her. We are, no doubt, still a long way from the general introduction into the international sphere of those principles which guide men in their relationships with each other in the same social group; but with the recognition that national growth depends not only upon circumstances, but upon the use the national mind makes of them—upon the way, that is, in which it exercises its power of choice—we can discern the faint beginnings of the operation, in international policy, of the same principle which has established personal morality upon its present secure basis. The German exaggeration of the nationalistic principle is almost universally stigmatized as "immoral"; and being immoral it is unintelligent, not only in its application but in its origin. The patriotic ideal gradually emerging from the chaos of the war is one which places enthusiasm under the guidance of reason, and bases all estimates of the value of the national culture, and all plans for its future development, upon an accurate knowledge of what it has already been able to accomplish, not only for itself and its own people, but also for the world at large, as compared with the work of other nationalities.

Nationality, therefore, as tradition and culture, not as racial endowment, was the vital principle at issue

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in the war. This is equally clear whether the conflict is regarded from the point of view of its causes and origins, or from the point of view of the settlement which must follow now that victory lies with the Powers who were defending the principle as a sane and salutary element in human evolution against the Powers, or rather the Power, who fantastically aimed at destroying it altogether. "Nationalism," says Mr. Arnold J. Toynbee, in his highly interesting book on *Nationality and the War*, "has been strong enough to produce war in spite of us. It has terribly proved itself to be no outworn creed, but a vital force to be reckoned with."—"The right reading of Nationality has become an affair of life and death."<sup>1</sup> And Mr. Toynbee, with a knowledge of European politics, especially in the case of the smaller nationalities, which is almost marvellous, and a courage which is entirely so, proceeded to apply the principle of nationality to a reconstruction of the map of Europe upon the hypothesis that the Southern and Western Powers would finally defeat the Central Powers. To one at least of its readers this powerful and fascinating book is chiefly significant because it entirely disregards the racial factor as an element in nationality. "Like all great forces in human life, it is nothing material or mechanical, but a subjective psychological feeling in living people. This feeling can be kindled by the pressure of one or several of a series of factors—a common country, especially if it is a well-defined physical region, like an island, a river basin, or a mountain mass; a common language, especially if it has given birth to a literature; a common religion, and that much more impalpable force, a common tradition or sense of memories shared from the past."<sup>2</sup> How far this statement agrees with the position assumed in the foregoing pages, the reader is able to decide for himself, or will be able to do so if he has also read the pages in which Mr. Toynbee applies his principle to all the complex and difficult problems of the European situation. There is only one aspect of the definition

<sup>1</sup> *Nationality and the War*, by Arnold J. Toynbee (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1915), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.



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in regard to which the writer would wish to suggest another point of view: that indicated by the statement that nationality is a "subjective psychological feeling in living people." There is, of course, a sense in which all human experiences, even those arising from contact with "material or mechanical" forces, are "subjective psychological feelings"; but the practical experience of sane men draws a distinction between the subjective and the objective which does not entirely correspond to the distinction between "psychological" and "material" as Mr. Toynbee contrasts these epithets. The effect which a friend's conversation produces upon me is subjective; the conversation itself is objective—it has a practical existence external to myself. The education we receive in our early youth; the social influences that surround us; the political events and persons we meet with; in a word, all the forces and tendencies of the national tradition we are born into—all these are as truly objective as the material and mechanical forces which operate on us from the outside. The forces, therefore, that constitute nationality are not subjective in the sense that they are merely states of mind, although they may be in the sense that they produce states of mind, which is exactly the case with the impact of material and mechanical forces. The national tradition in which we live and move consists no less of psychological forces than of material and mechanical forces, and there is no more reason why we should call the external psychological forces subjective than we should call the external material and mechanical forces subjective. The forces, therefore, which make nationality are actually existing forces, no more to be described as subjective than the sun and the stars and the furniture in our houses.

But whether subjective or objective Mr. Toynbee emphatically recognizes that nationality is a living force in the sense that Guizot recognized it as a living force: "the recognition of Nationality is the necessary foundation for European peace";<sup>1</sup> and in his analysis of the national problems involved in the whole sphere of European politics from Ireland to Poland, from Alsace

<sup>1</sup> Toynbee, p. 40.

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to Schleswig-Holstein, he clearly demonstrates that the sense of common interest must be, as far as the national safety of other spheres of common interest will allow, the ruling principle in separating a group of people from one nation and adding it to another. Race is implicitly excluded all the way through as a determining factor, as a crucial example will show. Mr. Toynbee wishes to reconstitute Polish nationality as a political entity; but while he would include in the new State a populous part of Silesia, "the extremely important mining district of the Five Towns," because "the mass of the miners and workers is recruited from the Polish countryside, and the growth of the Polish majority has already made itself felt in politics," yet he recognizes that the "Polish wing of the Slavonic migration from the East," which occupied Silesia about A.D. 600, has become Germanized to such an extent as to make the province as a whole of purely German nationality. In the latter case there is no organic continuity of common Polish interest; in the former the sense of common interest has survived the disruption of the Polish nation and the transportation of its members into the midst of the German people, and inspires the action of the colony as an organized social and political unit.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Poland, as in the majority of his examples of national reconstruction, Mr. Toynbee admits the common interest as being clear beyond the necessity for further investigation; but in the critical case of Alsace he suggests a *plébiscite* to determine what the nationality, or rather nationalities, of its people shall be.<sup>2</sup> A *plébiscite* to determine nationality! Paradoxical as the notion may appear at the first glance, it is really nothing more or less than a perfectly logical application of the principle of community of interest as the basis of national life. It simply means that every Alsatian citizen shall have an opportunity of stating whether he conceives his interests, in the broad sense we have attached to that term, as lying in the sphere of German national life or in the sphere of French national life. This decision would be an expression of the result which his social and political environment has had upon him;

<sup>1</sup> Toynbee, pp. 67-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41 *sqq.*

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of all the intellectual, moral and material circumstances which have given his personality its bent, its interests, its sympathies, its hopes, its ideals. It is probable that no single motive will dominate his choice. It will spring rather from that intermingled crowd of thoughts, sentiments, emotions and passions which commonly inspire, or at least direct and colour, the simplest actions of men. But it will no less represent the result of the interaction of his personality and its environment; it will make clearly manifest the interests which dominate his life and shape his character. If his interests, that is to say, his education and training, his conscious studies, his emotional sympathies, his practical prospects, have moulded his ideals to identity with those of Germany—and he knows, being an Alsatian, quite well what *they* are—he cannot but decide to be included in German nationality. The question for him is purely one of deciding where his interests lie, as in the case of the 40,000 inhabitants of Alsace who repudiated German nationality in 1872. Whether, while still remaining in Alsace, he may be a German depends, with Mr. Toynbee, upon the result of the *plébiscite*, or upon certain geographical boundary questions affecting the national existence of France and Germany. But this fact does not alter the nature of the decision as an expression of community of interest with Germany; it only means that if the *plébiscite* goes against him, he will have to live in the midst of a community whose dominating national interests are, for the moment, not identical with his own. Whether this painful situation will endure depends upon the way in which his environment is deliberately affected by the policy of the French Government and the action of the French people. Proper treatment, the conscious efforts of statesmen to induce community of political interest, the friendly action of his French neighbours to induce community of social interest, will tend to assuage the differences of national sentiment, and will end by making his children, if not himself, as French as the majority of the population. But, in any event, to see an individual citizen deliberately deciding whether he will be a Frenchman or a German is, indeed, to give the lie to all the fatalism of race, and to exhibit clearly the fact that



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nationality is the result of environmental forces acting upon a particular human personality to produce a sense of community of interest with those subjected to the same environment.

These considerations appear to suggest that, in the future, nationality, while never losing those emotional characteristics which always surround and idealize the associations of childhood and early youth, will tend to assume more and more the deliberate ethical action of mature and experienced wisdom. When "the map of Europe has been remade" it is certain that the principle of nationality, after a vindication at once so practical and so dramatic, will possess more strength and vitality than ever before; and the question will arise, nay, has already arisen, how the principle can be directed towards action to secure the peace and happiness of the world at large. The writer finds himself unable to avoid the conclusion springing from every argument in the foregoing pages that the same process which has produced nationality will, if guided by the conscious and deliberate moral choice of the people of the nations, produce that unity and harmony in the world which has already been produced in the inner life of the different communities. We have seen how, through the operation of that principle, the hostile spheres of interest of different groups of people have lost their bitterness and have been merged into, or identified with, spheres of friendly and co-operating interest. The gradual growth of an organic continuity of common interest is the living force of national evolution, a force which has reduced warring interests to peaceful co-operation, and has united in the harmony of common activities and sympathies peoples who were separated from each other by what seemed insurmountable barriers of race, religion, civilization and culture in general. Now that a principle of cultivated reason and deliberate moral choice has been more generally introduced into the manifestations of the national spirit, is it too high a hope that the operation of the same harmonizing forces will finally obliterate some of the more poignant differences which now accentuate the hostilities of different nations, and that, too, without destroying any of the essential factors in

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the free and independent life of individual communities? If freedom and independence are to-day enjoyed by communities separated by all the ancient divisions of race, religion and culture, but united in common devotion to one Imperial purpose, how can we fear that freedom and independence may be destroyed by unity of action directed towards the universal realization of a world for ever at peace?

Those who, like the present writer, believe that the same forces that have produced nationality, the harmonizer of competitive interests in the same community, will also naturally develop themselves to produce harmony amidst the competitive interests of different communities, are opposed by a school of thought which, while admitting the objective reality of the principle of nationality as a factor in human evolution, regards it as an unmixed evil as being the direct cause of war. It is, therefore, necessary that before developing the thesis that nationality is the natural instrument of peace, the writer should endeavour to remove out of the way the difficulties created by those who maintain that it is the fount and origin of all the mischiefs that cause trouble between different communities. The writer believes that these difficulties are based upon historical fallacies and unsubstantiated predictions. Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. Norman Angell, in their pre-war attacks upon the sentiment of nationality, were largely actuated by the conviction that it lay at the root of international animosities; but both these able writers founded their polemic against nationality upon the theory that it had no historical existence or justification of any sort, being to the one an hallucination, to the other an irrational instinct. Their premises being untenable, as previously shown, their conclusions are irrelevant, for one, at least, who regards nationality neither as an irrational instinct nor an hallucination. It is proposed, therefore, to deal rather with a distinguished American publicist who, accepting a view not greatly different from that developed in these pages as to the historical basis of nationality, does, nevertheless, emphatically assert that, even so, it is the cause of war, and as such ought to be eliminated and destroyed as a principle of

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human action.<sup>1</sup> The writer in question, Mr. Sydney Brooks, not only repudiates emphatically the fetish of racial nationality, but starts with a clear conception of the meaning of nationality as a living principle of social activity at the present time. "Patriotism—or nationality," he says, "was never a more stubborn or more jealous fact than it is to-day. Men are born and reared in a certain atmosphere, acquire a consciousness limited to their frontiers, accumulate various ideals, modes of life, customs and characteristics, distinctive ways of looking at things, and so on; and all these acquisitions become intensely dear to them, become, indeed, a part of themselves, and intertwined with their highest emotions and their most sacred associations." The expression "consciousness limited to their frontiers" does not represent the full truth, because, as argued in the foregoing chapters, one of the main causes of the development of a rich and vivid national sentiment is the generous admixture of foreign influences in the national atmosphere; and nationality is, therefore, by no means limited to a consciousness of one's own frontiers, but involves as an essential element a vigorously receptive attitude towards sources of inspiration flowing from beyond the frontiers. But substantially Mr. Brooks has the right view that nationality is a tradition or culture; and it is, therefore, not in the fantasy of racial kinship, but in the existence of separate national lines of historical development, that he finds the cause of war. Because separate communities have cultivated separate traditions, and give a high value to the traditions they have cultivated, therefore we have wars. The evolution of civilization on its present lines is, he thinks, inevitably fraught with such disasters as that we have just endured. "For the root-cause of this appalling convulsion," continues Mr. Brooks, "we shall have to look deeper than to dynastic ambitions or bungling diplomacy, if we wish to find the comprehensive source which it must be the business of Pacifists in the future to dam. This root-cause, this comprehensive source, I take to be nothing less than the fact

<sup>1</sup> *The Dream of Universal Peace*, by Sydney Brooks (*Harper's Monthly Magazine*, November 1916).



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and sentiment of nationality." And not only does he regard it as the cause of the recent war, but he regards it as the cause of war in general, so far, at least, as modern times are concerned. "To those," he proceeds, "who believe in and dream of and work for a coming time of universal peace, I would say, 'Nationality, there is the enemy.'" And again: "There is a fundamental antinomy between Peace and Patriotism," with many other particular passages and the whole general argument to the same effect.

This position, the position of anti-national pacifism distinguished from pacifism based upon the recognition of nationality as possessing both historical and ethical justification, Mr. Brooks would further establish by the remedies which he prescribes for the disease. These are two, and they are alternatives. One is already familiar in the mid-Victorian Crystal Palace platitude of educating men into "citizen-of-the-worldism";<sup>1</sup> the other and the shorter road is for some one power to attain to dominion over the modern world as Rome attained to dominion over the ancient world. "Universal peace," he says, "may come as the result of a world-wide despotism, or through the undermining and destruction of the sentiment of nationality, and the substitution therefor of a patriotism co-existent with humanity." In one passage he does, indeed, seem to suggest a third remedy, viz., "a transformation in the moral values, judgments and instincts of mankind"; but as the texture of his previous argument makes it clear that this transformation is to result in the acceptance of cosmopolitanism, he really has only two cures to advertise, or perhaps, after all, only one, the destruction of national patriotism, either by the bloody tyranny of Welt-Macht or the creeping insidiousness of a specious humanitarian brotherhood.

Now those who have found themselves able to admit that view of the origin and progress of nationality maintained in the foregoing pages will, it is thought, have no option but to agree that Mr. Brooks is wrong all the

<sup>1</sup> "Our country is the world—our countrymen are mankind." Motto of the *Liberator*, W. L. Garrison's anti-slavery paper; first number issued January 1, 1831.

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way through, wrong in his statement that nationality was the cause of the war, wrong in his assertion that it is the cause of war in general, wrong in his proposals for remedying the evil of war. Anti-national pacifism, however, is based upon fallacies so specious from their humanitarian appeal that it is the plain duty of those who think it a dangerous and foolish heresy, even from the humanitarian point of view, to refute in detail the assertions made and the arguments propounded in its defence.

Was nationality, then, the actual root-cause of the latest war? That the fact or sentiment of nationality was the most predominant feature in the war cannot be denied; neither can it be denied that the British Empire entered the war in defence of the principle of nationality as outraged by the German invasion of Belgium, and in defence of British national honour as pledged to protect Belgian nationality. But why is it that as the war progressed it became increasingly clear that what the Allies were fighting for was to defend the principle of nationality against the rise of a world-power determined to destroy it? Why is it that in England, for example, the conviction that the British national tradition, our typical and individual national culture, is worth every sacrifice to preserve it, has, in the vast majority of those who enjoy its blessings, assumed the characteristic fervour of a religious faith? Why did our national determination to throw our all into the conflict become clearer and stronger and purer as the war grew older? Surely because events made it certain that Germany, as a whole, was so persuaded of the superiority of her own "racial" culture to all other national traditions whatsoever that she wished to impose it on the world at large, partly because it was for the good of the world at large that this should be, and partly because she thought that the "race" possessing such a culture was predestined to universal empire. So that while we declared war in defence of Belgian national existence and our own national honour, we pursued it to the end in defence of the general principle of nationality against a Power pledged to destroy it for every people except its own. So that it is abundantly clear that the sentiment or fact of nationality played a prominent part in

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the inception and execution of the war. But what then? If I take up arms to defend something I love and value, is the existence of that something to be blamed as the cause of war? Is it not rather the fact that the something I love and value is threatened? And am I tamely to surrender what I love and value lest I should be scolded as a quarrelsome person? It is the *threat* to nationality which is the essential kernel of the situation—that is the cause of war, and not the mere existence of nationality. Leave it in peace and, under normal conditions, it will leave you in peace. Was Bathsheba the cause of her husband's death, or was it the concupiscence of the King of Israel? Mr. Norman Angell, the very Prince of Pacifists, admits that a nation may go to war if its nationality is threatened, and *he* thinks that nationality is a mere irrational instinct.

Nationality, however, as we have seen, is not a mere irrational instinct, or a metaphysical dream, or a racial Mumbo-Jumbo, or an hallucination. It is the concrete and objective result of the historical process by which modern European civilization has been developed out of the wreck of the Roman Empire 1500 years ago. These separate streams of national inspiration, effort and idealism, all enriching the world with their variegated types of culture, each contributing something specific and something valuable to the common heritage of humanity—these are pregnant historical facts, the issue of ages of conscious and unconscious human effort, suffering, self-sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> They are not of to-day only; they have their roots deeply planted in the historic past. That we should refuse to fight for our national tradition against the threat of destruction or limitation would be to stultify the work of generations, to annihilate the age-long process which has given us our place and mission in the world.

But it is not nationality that is the cause of war, nor even our willingness to fight in defence of nationality. Nations have not always been at war. They have enjoyed long and frequent intervals of peace unaccompanied by any serious decadence in national sentiment. They have even kept out of war lest their nationality

<sup>1</sup> "The life of the world becomes poorer and more uniform for each national individuality which disappears" (*Poland*, by George Brandes).



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should be endangered, as some nations have done in our own time. But if nationality is the cause of war in the warring nations, logical decency compels the admission that it is the cause of peace in the peaceful nations. If Belgian nationality was the cause of the Great War, then it was equally the cause of peace, so long as it was left unthreatened and unattacked. Nationality, in truth, is neither the cause of war nor the cause of peace, any more than personal individuality is the cause of quarrelsomeness or the cause of quiet living. It all depends on the person, his separate individual characteristics, and the amount of injury he can bear without feeling compelled to hit back. Would it not be equally true or false to say that it was nationality which for so long kept America out of the war as it is to say that it was nationality which plunged her and the other belligerent peoples into war? America joined in the war when her national rights and her national existence were threatened beyond a point which she could endure with national dignity and national security. It is not nationality as such that is the cause of war, but the threat to nationality—which is quite a different matter.<sup>1</sup>

Some one, however, may perhaps be inclined to suggest that nationality is the cause of war because the excessive admiration of the German people for their own nationality and its culture lay at the root of the recent war. The premiss has considerable truth; the conclusion is false. Excessive admiration for one's own national culture is the *disease* of nationality, the very pathology of patriotism, the madness of nationality; just as an individual person's excessive admiration of himself and his attainments is the disease, and may become the madness, of personality. That German nationality is thoroughly diseased and corrupted in this respect is a fact which no reasonable man can doubt. The German claim to world dominion, based upon the superiority of the German "race," has been advanced by so many representative German thinkers—men to whom in times of peace, and on other subjects, we had listened with respect and admiration—that it is impossible not to

<sup>1</sup> "Not the desire of nationality, but the desire to destroy nationality, is what makes the wars of nationality."—Norman Angell, *War and the Essential Realities*, p. 51.

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recognize it as the dominant trait in the German national tradition. The innumerable and typical manifestations of Teutonic megalomania read like the ravings of *delirium tremens*, or the fantastic delusions of nightmare. When our memory of the war is less acute than now we shall regard them as incredible, unless we recall them by reference to the written records. They are the delusions of madness, none the less madness because of the method that guides them, the false philosophy that inspires them. There is, indeed, no madman so mad as a madman with a theory, as any doctor in a lunatic asylum can witness; and, of course, the German madness, like everything else German, finds its justification in a philosophic system. Long before Droysen and Treitschke and von Bernhardi and Chamberlain ventilated their Pan-Germanism, Hegel elaborated his particular version of the philosophy of the Absolute, and it is on that philosophy that the German megalomania finally rests. With his general views on the method by which the Absolute, that fantastic fetish of the metaphysical medicine-man, enters into the world of phenomena we need not at present concern ourselves. But it is pertinent to our purpose to note how, with the terrible consistency of German logic, he extends his philosophy of the Absolute to the sphere of history and politics. In his *Philosophy of Right*, with that anthropomorphism which metaphysicians who have attacked religion have borrowed from its crudest forms, he gives real existence to what is, after all, a merely verbal generalization. He conceives the process of political evolution as an active spirit, "a universal idea, or kind, or species," which "has absolute authority over individual states."—"This is the spirit which gives itself reality in the process of world-history."—"It is the self-caused, self-existent spirit, which presents itself as the universal and efficient leaven of world-history." This spirit has embodied itself in successive nations to whom for the time has been given absolute right over all other nations. Oriental, Greek, and Roman Empires have, in turn, been incarnations of this spiritual power, "temporary actualizations of the universal spirit."—"To each nation is to be ascribed a single principle comprised under its geographical and anthropological

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existence. To the nation whose natural principle is one of these stages is assigned the accomplishment of it through the process characteristic of the self-developing self-consciousness of the world-spirit. In the history of the world this nation is for a given epoch dominant, although it can make an epoch but once. In contrast with the absolute right of this nation to be the bearer of the current phase in the development of the world-spirit, *the spirits of other existing nations are void of right, and they, like those whose epochs are gone, count no longer in the history of the world.*" The German Empire is the final incarnation of the spirit, representing a "new discovery" in its operation upon the political world. "The new discovery is the unity of the divine and the human. By means of it objective truth is reconciled with freedom, and that, too, inside of self-consciousness and subjectivity. This new basis, infinite and yet positive, it has been charged upon the Northern principle of the Germanic nations to bring to completion."<sup>1</sup>

Here, of course, we have one of those pseudo-philosophical theories which metaphysicians have in all ages, through the generous contempt of intelligent men, been allowed to spin for the alleviation of their own solitude and the admiration of the ignorant. Even when the theory was expanded into the blatant puerilities of Chamberlain, the blind Anglophobia of Treitschke, and the bloodthirstiness of Bernhardi, it was still neglected as the intellectual plaything of a few historical and military special pleaders. But when it became the main plank in the historico-philosophical education of a whole community; when it was craftily allied with the national pride of a people who made a boast of their old *furor Teutonicus*; when the arrogance of "race" was wedded to the arrogance of a metaphysical egotism; the combination led inevitably to the Peace of Brest-Litovsk and the exploitation of Russia, to the spiritual and material annihilation of Belgium, Serbia and Roumania. Such a theory, leading to such a catastrophe,

<sup>1</sup> Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, translated by S. W. Dyde, M.A., D.Sc. (London: Geo. Bell & Sons, 1896), pp. 342-3. On p. 347 Hegel refers to Dr. Stühr's *Vom Untergange der Naturstaaten*, and says: "The principle of subjectivity and self-conscious freedom he ascribes to the German nation."



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indubitably exhibits the very madness of national pride and egotism, the disease of nationality. The pet phrase of the German ruling classes, "Welt-Macht oder Niedergang," is clearly no mere audacious epigram, but a summary of tendencies long current among the German people, and supported by that transcendental metaphysics to which, in one form or another, they have constantly been so partial. The fact that common-sense, the ancient and eternal enemy of metaphysics, has been eliminated by the German metaphysicians from the sphere of politics, while other metaphysicians have had the saving grace to be illogical in that respect, has but served to make German metaphysicians madder than the rest, and their representative statesmen enemies of the human race.

Not nationality, therefore, the sane and normal pride of a healthy people in its historic achievements and its legitimate aspirations, made the Germans go to war; it was the disease of nationality which actuated their grandiose crusade against humanity; it was their false and fantastic notion of their own nationality. If an individual member of society exhibits such characteristics to a degree that is dangerous to himself or his fellows, he is sequestered in a gaol or a lunatic asylum; but men of sane and moderate character are not restrained from cultivating their personal gifts and exhibiting their personal accomplishments within the limits assigned by the right of other sane and moderate men to do the same. It is a flagrant abuse of terms to say that nationality is the cause of war; it is diseased and corrupted nationality. It is pride, ambition, selfishness, inordinate lust of power. The so-called antinomy between Peace and Patriotism does not exist; what does exist is the eternal antinomy between Passion and Self-Control, between Madness and Sanity, between Wisdom and Folly.

We have now to deal with the remedies for war proposed by the anti-nationalistic Pacifists. These are, one remembers, the destruction of nationality by some Power which has attained universal dominion such as that of which the Germans have dreamed, or by the transmutation of nationality into so-called cosmopolitanism.

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The Germans, as is well known, promised universal peace as the result of their universal dominion. Peace, indeed, it might be, but such as that once attributed to Rome by a British prince: *solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*; <sup>1</sup> desolation they create, and call *that* peace; as they have done in Belgium and France and Serbia and Roumania and Russia to-day. No material desolation merely, but a desolation which chokes the primeval springs of a nation's spiritual existence. Mr. Brooks quotes Rome as a parallel and an example for his desiderated modern world-tyranny. But although the sense of nationality had not generally attained in Classical times anything like its present degree of passionate intensity, yet it is a truism that Rome interfered as little as possible with the local beliefs, habits and traditions of the peoples whom she incorporated into her Empire. A patriotic Greek like Plutarch can honestly advise his patriotic fellow-countrymen to cultivate their national life within the limits assigned by Rome, whose Empire he describes, from the political point of view, as the most beautiful of all human creations, echoing the very words of a patriotic Roman poet in the tribute he pays to her as a Greek.<sup>2</sup>

But did the generous policy of Rome, thus generously recognized, serve to secure eternal and universal peace? How long did the portals of the Temple of Janus remain shut, even during the *Pax Romana* of Trajan and the Antonines? And can it be imagined for one moment that, even under the dominion of a world-power, universal and eternal peace will reign unless the dominant power comes to terms with the spirit of nationality among the subject peoples, as Rome did, as we have done with Boer nationality, with Scottish, Canadian and Australian nationality, and as we shall have to do with Irish nationality and Indian nationality, which, in the last-named case, our own administration has created and fostered? It is possible that *regular* warfare might cease for a time under the technical domination of a world-power, but it would be followed by a period of the most internecine irregular war that the world has

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola*, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *De Fortuna Romanorum*, 316 E. Virgil, *Georgics*, II. 534.

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ever known : a war of plots and rebellions, of assassinations and insurrections, of desperate attempts to regain liberty and bloody attempts at repression. The world would be at perpetual war, either until national independence had been fully regained or until the dominating Power had been compelled to concede so much to the spirit of nationality that its actual essence would flourish under a merely verbal supremacy. The dominating Power would either be in a state of constant war, or it would have to recognize nationality. It is the merest confusion of thought, therefore, to say that the dominion of a world-power would destroy war by destroying nationality. It is impossible to see in such a suggestion anything but a means of plunging the whole world into a period of barbarian anarchy which would be prolonged until its various peoples had attained the same position of separate national independence which they actually enjoy to-day. And then, presumably, upon this hypothesis of the anti-national Pacifists, the whole process would repeat itself once more. History may, indeed, as some have thought, develop itself in circles, but hardly, one's sanity believes, in such a vicious circle as this.

What, then, about the other "remedy," the gradual substitution of a spirit of humanitarian cosmopolitanism in place of the present intensive consciousness of nationality, so that, as Mr. Brooks says, "men cease to think of themselves as belonging to this country or that, but simply and naturally as citizens of the world"? But this, of course, is an old story now; it has not only been debated on a thousand platforms, and in innumerable publications, but it has been a theme developed by the practical demonstration of a millennium of European history. The Catholic Church cherished the grandiose conception of a *civitas Dei*, a Holy State, a Holy Roman Empire, coterminous with the boundaries of the discovered world. This conception was sanctioned and imposed by all the authority of religion when religion was the greatest existent force for moulding the characters, forming the thoughts and directing the actions of mankind. It was supported in practice by a system of ecclesiastical administration which gave Asiatic bishops to Canterbury, English prelates to French and German Sees, made a Cappadocian the patron saint



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of England, and an Englishman the patron saint of Finland. We may readily agree that this ecclesiastical cosmopolitanism accomplished much good in broadening the intellectual outlook of men and in admitting the peoples of Christendom to the knowledge that they possessed certain spiritual aims as a common heritage. But even so, the influx of foreign elements into a national current strengthened the characteristic national culture at the same time as it broadened and diversified its content. And although a German emperor went to Canossa as a submissive slave of the spiritual domain; although the inspiration of a common faith could stir the whole of Europe to religious crusades against Infidels abroad or to religious persecutions against Heretics at home; although for a thousand years the mind of Europe as a whole was dominated by a theological tyranny more extreme than any ever wielded by a temporal Power; yet the national idea could not be crushed; it grew stronger on oppression; it entirely eliminated the power of the Papacy in many States, while even in the rest the two powers existed side by side, the spiritual power growing constantly weaker as civilization advanced, until at last there was no country in Europe whose religion was not guided by national aims and subjected to national ideals. If the eternal prestige of Christian Rome, wielding all the terrors and hopes of religion, apportioning all the rewards of submission and all the penalties of rebellion, both here and in the hereafter, failed to make man a citizen of the world, to what principle of human action can we look with any expectation of realizing that elusive dream?

If universally organized religion failed, can we expect that humanitarian sentiment, even when cherished with religious fervour, will succeed? The French Revolution, with its appeals, at once passionate and philosophic, to the brotherhood of man, actually gave new life to national idealism. The very tyrannies against which men fought in the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century were national tyrannies, and the brotherhood of man, as an operative political principle, limited its action to the brotherhood of those who were striving for freedom within their own national boundaries. The slumbering national traditions of Greece,

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Roumania, Serbia and Bulgaria were re-awakened by inspiration found in Paris; and the universal brotherhood of man taught there translated itself into the national brotherhood of Serbians, or Roumanians, or Bulgarians, or Greeks. It is perhaps possible, at any rate academically conceivable, that men may at some distant date, especially if stimulated in that direction by a hostile invasion from some other planet, regard themselves "quite simply and naturally" as citizens of the world; just as it is possible that one day the sun will be quite cold and there will then be an end of us all, patriots and cosmopolitans alike. But as a matter of hard historical fact our European civilization has developed, and is to-day developing, on national lines. Nationality is the master light of all our seeing; the fountain light of all our day. Mr. Brooks says, quite wrongly it is clear, that in the matter of nationality the cultured sensibilities of humanity are at odds with its primal instincts. But the fact is that nationality is not a primal instinct at all. It is the result of the evolution of the whole mass of human qualities, sentimental, intellectual, literary, artistic, religious, scientific, political. It is the one supreme, ineluctable fact of our modern civilization. The world-power of Rome fell before it; the dominating authority of spiritual despotism crumbled away under its influence. History, at any rate, gives no sanction to the theory that nationality which has overthrown and slain cosmopolitanism, whether as world-power or humanitarian sentiment, will, in its turn, be overthrown and slain by its resuscitated victim.

If, then, it is futile to look for eternal peace amid the anticipated ruin of national idealism, in what principle, in what power, in what course of action, can we see the possibility of a remedy for the evils which admittedly co-exist with the present state of affairs? The writer confesses that he is of the opinion that nationality, so far from being the cause of war, is actually the one instrument destined, if wisely directed, to secure lasting and universal peace; and to some considerations bearing on this head will be devoted the next and concluding chapter of his book.

## CHAPTER XV

Nationality as the Instrument of Peace; Nationality can be deprived of its dangerous Elements by the Operation of the same Causes as those which produced it—National Organization for Purposes of Peace—Cosmopolitan Ideals invalid without national Machinery to work them—The Growth of international Community of Interest dependent upon international Action to secure common Ends—In History Action comes first, Theory and philosophical Justification afterwards—Nationality and Militarism—Pre-war Signs of the Operation of the Principle of joint Action in the international Sphere: The "Concert of Europe," "European Unity," the "Federation of Europe"—The Demand for a "League of Nations" in Relation to the slow historical Growth of a Sense of common Interest—The Danger of hasty and revolutionary Methods: Universal and lasting Peace attainable by a cautious Application of the Lessons of History.

It is, perhaps, inevitable that to the minds of some of his readers the suggestion should occur that the writer has been inclined to place nationality on too lofty a pedestal, that he has regarded it, in and for itself, as a final and satisfactory end of social development. The suspicion, however, is unfounded. Nationality, with all its splendid accomplishments in unifying warring communities, with all its inspiration to guide individual citizens towards self-sacrifice for social ends, is but a phase in human evolution, and will eventually be lauded or condemned only so far as it has contributed to the happiness of the world as a whole. No sane thinker, no historical student, would wish to prophesy what will be the final character of terrestrial society, if a final character it is destined to achieve. But the writer, at any rate, would be false to every principle laid down in the preceding pages; he would be false to what is highest and best in the great benefactors of humanity; if he did not cherish a hope that the next stage of social evolution will be one in which peace, employed with intelligence and organized towards social ends, will furnish the fullest opportunity for the develop-



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ment of all human excellence. Peace, universal peace, must surely be the ideal of every man who has a social conscience delicate enough to recognize that so long as there is room on earth for every man, every man has an inalienable right to live on the earth, and to develop his individual and social qualities unchecked save by the right of every other man to do the same and no more. This is the simple principle that has given cohesion and strength to the most highly civilized communities; and it is a natural extension of the same principle to regard it as the inevitable cause of the coming cohesion between nations still distracted by warring interests which have hitherto threatened to make international cohesion impossible.

Such being the ideal, how can one help to realize it? The answer follows inevitably for those who accept the positions explained in the previous chapters. The principle and the machinery of nationality, which can be, and have frequently been, made the instruments of war, must now be directed and organized towards the accomplishment of peace. Again it must be insisted that nationality, so far from being that sort of sinister and supernatural monstrosity which the anti-national Pacifist deems it, is in reality a simple and natural product of social evolution. It is the work of men's minds and men's hands, and can be directed and controlled by men's minds and men's hands. It is not the mere worship of that silly and superannuated fetish of racial distinctions which are supposed to "destine" one "race" to empire and another to slavery. It is not founded solely upon any single passion or quality of human nature; it is the progressive, synthetical development of all of them alike towards one harmonious culmination. It is the end of the social process by which scattered elements of mutually antagonistic activity are organically welded into a common and continuous solidarity—a solidarity affecting the spiritual, intellectual, moral and artistic powers of man, and all their manifold activities in the sphere of human achievement. It is as an organism that nationality has developed a highly elaborate and complicated machinery for entering into relationships with other organisms;

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and, being a human organism, one function of its machinery is the exercise of a selecting and guiding intelligence capable of diverting its own activities into directions intellectually and morally conceived as desirable. That machinery, with all its apparatus of international relationships, its Governments, its Ministers for Foreign Affairs, its Ambassadors, its Diplomats, its connexions of Trade and Commerce, Music, Literature, Sport, Science, its intersocial life, its foreign travel, its international societies of Learning and Labour—all these are the product of characteristically national life; and if many of them have hitherto been too frequently used as channels of international animosity, it is only as channels, and the same source and fountain of national life which used them to pour a flood of hatred, contempt and jealousy upon other communities can, under proper inspiration, use them as readily to flood the world with streams of beneficent activity. The same mechanical appliances, the same workshops, the same men, that before the war were devoted to the operations of peace and were during the war utilized for the manufacture of munitions of war, will be diverted again to peaceful purposes when the war is finally over. The aeroplane that kills a family by their fireside to-night will to-morrow create new, and strengthen ancient, ties, by carrying familiar correspondence to the most distant parts of the globe with the speed of Ariel. There are some writers who imagine that any connotation of the word "national" is essentially and inevitably evil; that the principle of nationality is in eternal opposition to liberty and justice.<sup>1</sup> But a more philosophical diagnosis discloses the fact

<sup>1</sup> "There is no region of the earth where the national idea has wrought such havoc or rioted in such wantonness of power as in Macedonia.—One turns from a survey of these races and their rivalries, asking what future of peace and common work there can be while the curse of this national idea still teaches men that the vital fact in their lives is the tradition, or the memory, or the habit of speech, which divides them from one another."—*Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, by H. N. Brailsford (Methuen & Co., 1906), p. 107. And yet Mr. Brailsford makes it quite clear that the main cause of the trouble is not the existence of the separate traditions, but the constant endeavour to subvert them or "assimilate" them by means of "propaganda."

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that, like all other human creations, it is as capable of direction towards beneficent as to maleficent ends. If secret diplomacy is evil, the skill, the tact, the delicacy, the experience acquired by secret diplomacy will not be wasted when diplomacy becomes as open as the day. If an oligarchy or an autocracy perverts national institutions to base or selfish purposes, what is to prevent democracy from using the same machinery for noble and altruistic ends? There is not a general election which does not demonstrate how the same national administrative system can be made the means of realizing different national ideals. We can have a Conservative, a Liberal, a Labour Government to express our national purposes; but the varying Governments use the same administrative institutions, the essential difference being in the spirit which actuates them. And if, as is clearly the case, we must use the organized results of ages of administrative experience in our national transactions, it is incredible that we should discard the same experience in dealing with international affairs. The machinery slowly evolved by the needs and activities of many generations is ready to our hands; the problem is how to convert it to entirely beneficial purposes.

To many people these are, of course, mere academical truisms, but the views urged by the cosmopolitan necessitate their emphatic repetition. How shall I enter, as the cosmopolitan wishes me to enter, into friendly relationships, as one only of 50,000,000 Britons, with every one of 50,000,000 Germans or Japanese, the sole connexus of relationship being some imagined allegiance to "God, the Invisible King" of all of us alike? <sup>1</sup> Even with national emotion at its present pitch, I cannot enter into friendly relationships with the 49,999,999 other Britons. It is almost as much as I can do to avoid quarrelling, even about the war, with the odd nine with whom I am brought into personal

<sup>1</sup> I find that I am repeating Mr. Norman Angell here. "We talk of hating or of having a friendship for Germany or 'Germans'—sixty-four million men, women and children whom we have never seen, and in the nature of things never can see" (*War and the Essential Realities*, p. 29). But Mr. Angell, of course, attaches to the illustration quite a different moral from that appended to it in the text.



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contact; and there are many with whom I shun personal contact. For anything beyond merely restricted individual activity, for any extension of my work into even the smallest social spheres, I must join some organized body with whose general aims I am in sympathy. Even Mr. Britling, when he wrote that touching personal letter to the unknown German father of his private secretary, did not post his missive, doubtless restrained by the thought that there are domestic and personal delicacies which the deepest sympathy dare not violate.<sup>1</sup> There are to-day thousands of Englishmen who talk of never having personal dealings with any German again so long as they are alive; and the compliment is returned by thousands of Germans. But such an attitude is equally irrational and impossible. If we, as Britons, wish to mark our abhorrence of German culture as exhibited during the war, the only practical way in which we can make our abhorrence effective is to choose a Government pledged to responsibility for such a policy as will leave individual citizens no choice in the matter. Only by using national administrative machinery can the national will be carried into action; only by means of national institutions can we enter into relationship with other nationalities. Our own national organization is powerful, elaborate, firmly established, capable of far-reaching results for good or evil throughout the world, rich in experience, energetic in action, fertile in contrivance, the product of our own culture, the faithful reflex of our national character, the effective instrument of our national purposes. This strong and subtle creation is available as an instrument of international peace as soon as the British democracy has made up its mind that international peace is what it really wants.

It would carry the writer far beyond his legitimate purpose if he were to enter into the details of a democratic programme for the "capture" of national machinery by political parties actuated with the desire of universal and lasting peace. The air, too, is clamorous with the cries of those more expert politicians whose knowledge of the slow attainment of even the smallest

<sup>1</sup> *Mr. Britling Sees it Through*, p. 432.

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domestic reform does not warn them against the production of ready-made nostrums for the instantaneous realization of the grandiose conception of universal peace. The most salutary lesson that can be deduced from history takes the form of a threat against those who rush without preparation into revolutionary courses, and, for our present purpose, inculcates the view that only a democracy fully educated in what it means to be a nation can decide with reason and justice the issue of universal peace or war.

But meanwhile history also suggests certain considerations which seem to show that the democracies, in their efforts after universal peace, will be working in a direction, and can learn from a method, already well known as a direction and a method of social evolution. There are signs that what the Germans would call the *Zeit-Geist*; that what Mr. Wells wants us to call the "Divine Idea"; that what is, perhaps, after all, but the practical commonsense of mankind; has already set going a process which has inevitably led warring sections of the same community into all the decent harmonies of peaceful intercourse; has frequently produced sympathy and even unity between hostile communities; and whose extension to the international sphere may reasonably be expected to secure results not different in kind from those with which it can already be credited.

What is the nature of this process, and how does it operate? In one of Sir Gilbert Parker's Canadian stories there is an episode of two neighbouring settlements, one of French Catholics, and the other of Ulster Protestants.<sup>1</sup> One can imagine their mutual relation-

<sup>1</sup> *The World for Sale*, by Gilbert Parker (London: Wm. Heinemann). "Lebanon took command of the whole situation, and for the first time in the history of the two towns men worked together under one control like brothers. The red-shirted river-driver from Manitou and the lawyer's clerk from Lebanon; the Presbyterian minister and a Christian brother of the Catholic school; a Salvation Army Captain and a block-headed Catholic shantyman; the President of the Order of Good Templars and a Scotchman member of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament slaved together on the hand-engine to supplement the work of the two splendid engines of the Lebanon fire brigade," etc. (p. 310). This was "the day when Lebanon and Manitou were reconciled" (p. 321).

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ships. But there came a day when the Catholic chapel caught fire, and the efforts of the faithful were unable to extinguish it until they were seconded by the arrival of a well-organized fire brigade from the Ulster township; and so ended all animosities between Catholic community and Protestant community, although, of course, their individual members still argued and bickered about theological non-essentials. It was found that the common interest which both towns had in well-organized public services transcended and reduced to a proportionate inferiority differences on points of religious theory. The sympathy born of *common action* for a common end melted the ancient animosities. It is difficult to send a man to eternal fire when he has been helping you to extinguish a secular conflagration. Cardinal Mercier, in the same way, opens the gates of Heaven to a freethinker who has died for Belgium. This process by which men have been brought into combined action to secure common ends has so inter-fused them with mutual sympathy that their hostile action to secure rival ends has first lost its bitterness, then softened to a friendly competition, and at last become a traditional and academic topic of discussion at meetings of learned societies in their halls or of villagers in their taverns. What was it that actually brought English Catholics and English Protestants into mutual toleration and respect? What was it that actually effected what Mr. Norman Angell in his "Mon-cure Conway" Lecture called "that great European transformation of mind which brought it about that Catholic should not only cease massacring Protestant and *vice versa*, but that he should cease desiring to do so"?<sup>1</sup> Mr. Angell says that these results were due to a few philosophical books which set up an "intellectual ferment," and gradually introduced a different way of looking at religious questions. But it is a matter of grave doubt whether the philosophical books would have had much effect upon social conduct had not the ideas they inculcated been already put into operation

<sup>1</sup> *War and the Essential Realities*, delivered at South Place Institute on March 18, 1913, by Norman Angell (London: Watts & Co. 1913), p. 20.



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by the practical necessities of social intercourse. Man, in the mass, is seldom converted to an idea as a tenet of reason, as a general philosophical principle, until it dawns upon him that it embodies and justifies what has actually been his established practice. How long did the fires of Smithfield and the hangings on Tower Hill continue after the patriotic co-operation of Catholic and Protestant Englishmen to ward off the common danger of the Spanish Armada? Yet the reign of Elizabeth was a very hot-bed of persecuting literature; the great philosophical works on religious toleration were the product of a later age, which inherited a considerable practice of religious tolerance as part of the social tradition. The impulsion of national danger, the accentuation of a common patriotism, the growth of commerce and industry, the demands of social amenity, the growing complexity and multiplying interests of civilized society, brought the professors of different religious beliefs into sympathetic communion with each other upon a thousand secular occasions, with the result that the spheres of their common interests assumed a preponderating importance over the spheres of their rival and hostile interests. Toleration in England was thus a national practice before philosophers made it a subject of theoretical discussion. History has a trick of presenting us with the *fait accompli*; and when the philosophical writers build up their systems it is but to expand hints and advocate practices already embodied in actual experience—we find, like M. Jourdain, that we have been “speaking prose for more than forty years without knowing it.”<sup>1</sup> The practical common-sense of men living under the constant pressure of social demands dropped persecution for religion and for witchcraft, although the legislature was full of persecuting enactments against both. Even at so late a date as the Emancipation of the Catholics in England, a persecuting provision was introduced into the Emancipating Acts forbidding testamentary bequests to Roman Catholic corporations; but the practical sense of the community has recognized the sanctity of wills as a more important social interest than the privileges of

<sup>1</sup> Molière, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Act II. sc. vi.

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Protestant bodies, and the persecuting clause has never been put into operation. Common action to secure common ends is the finest solvent of bitterness, the greatest antidote to blood-thirstiness in disputes concerning rival or hostile ends.

If, therefore, the thrice-armed nationalities of the world are ever to be brought to a permanent frame of mind which will involve the natural cessation of military preparations, it seems likely that the transformation will be effected by methods and events bringing them into common *action* in the sphere of their common interests, and thus taking the sting out of their animosities in the spheres of their rival or hostile interests. History, upon whose lessons wise men always keep an eye, suggests that the question of international militarism may disappear as other evils have disappeared: by the creation of common spheres of practical interest which will so far diminish hostility in other matters as to render military armaments as obsolete and unnecessary as the faggot of the persecutor and the rapier of the duellist.

But this is in effect to suggest the apparent paradox that the same forces which have produced nationality will operate to limit or mitigate its activities; nor can the writer escape from the logical conclusion of his own argument. Moreover, it cannot fail to be a consolation and a help if it be recognized that history itself has enshrined the principle by which such a revolution, or rather such an evolution, can be accomplished. The writer has already endeavoured to show by detailed argument and illustration how this peace-producing principle has operated through vast tracts of historical progress. If he now ventures to conclude his essay with a few suggestions on this point as one of current international importance, it is not with the fantastic hope of providing a ready-made remedy for the difficulties that lie ahead, but merely with the desire to place the difficulties in their proper proportions and to suggest deliberate and conservative caution in dealing with them.

It must be admitted that at the very outset of any attempt to apply the machinery of nationality to

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the establishment of peace lies the value of nationality itself and its relationship to the military armaments that are designed to protect it. And, as we have seen, the value of nationality is more keenly recognized to-day than at any period of history. Since Roman Catholic statesmen surrendered the magnificent conception of a political "State of God" to the demands of national particularism, and the "Holy Roman Empire" became a merely pedantic and traditional title for a group of separate States with separate and even hostile interests, the political development of Europe has gone in the direction of emphasizing national differences, and of removing every day still further away from practical realization the poetical dream of the federation of Europe, not to speak of a "federation of the World." The "national idea" has been an infinitely more potent force in European politics than the principle of brotherhood which was partly the inspiration and partly the outcome of the French Revolution. The power of the former was based upon a realization of actual facts and pressing practical necessities; while the latter represented an idealism which took no account of the fitness or unfitness of the existing material with which, if at all, its conceptions were to be realized. To discuss the question whether humanity would be better off had nationality been eliminated as a factor in its development is as idle as the schoolboy exercise which played with the inquiry whether the destruction of Rome by Carthage would have, or would have not, produced more beneficent results than the destruction of Carthage by Rome. The fact is that Rome still influences the daily life of every citizen in Europe; and the fact is that Europe to-day is a group of separate and varyingly hostile nationalities whose common interests are conceived as trifling compared with their competing and opposing interests; and that where the existence of common interests is most clearly recognized there the sentiment of nationality is most solid and complete.

Now, the armies and navies of Europe are at once the symbol and the defence of these competing and opposing interests, and it is idle to expect any voluntary diminution of such means of protecting national interests until



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it can be demonstrated, beyond the faintest possibility of doubt or suspicion, that national interests will be as safe without them as with them. It must be remembered that national interests and national sentiment as they exist to-day are, in each separate case, the current form assumed by a particular group of tendencies which are not the result either of racial divisions or of the selfish strivings of the individual subjects or citizens at present living within the sphere of their operation. They represent, rather, the so far final result of streams of influence which, although marked with peculiarities due to the transmission of local characteristics from generation to generation, have been more or less freely open to a flood of external modifications; so that national interests, when seen from the point of view of their historical development, are not necessarily organized manifestations of a Spartan exclusiveness, but separate groups of international experiences coloured by particularist and national sentiment. This national sentiment, when based upon ignorance or misguided by calculating politicians, may claim that the particular form of civilization to which a nation has attained shall be the type and exemplar of all other nationalities, which are to be crushed in order to make way for its own "higher" civilization. But this is not a point of view ostensibly assumed by any of the great nations in face of the other great nations, except in the case of Germany, in whom it is an aberration from the normal civilized development of nationality. All that each of them normally demands is its "place in the sun"; the right and the opportunity to maintain its own traditional culture and economic fabric intact—to preserve, in a word, its individuality as a nation. Even a modified national ambition of this kind is sufficient to justify any sacrifice to maintain the national tradition immune from violent intrusion. No nation can be expected to regard its culture, its civilization, its economic fabric, as of no more value to itself than any other culture, or civilization, or economic fabric, or of no value to the world at all. For even nationality itself, being largely nourished and moulded by international influences, can plead its international value for its justification. Any

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direct suggestion, therefore, that a nation should reduce the ramparts that, as things are, protect its national existence and international usefulness, stirs into suspicious activity a complicated mass of emotions and sentiments, which, unreasonable as these may be in their immediate origin and present manifestation, are soon protected and fortified by many excellent reasons drawn from the study of history or based upon practical experience. These reasons corroborate the feelings and accentuate the imaginations which centre in the safety of the national ideal, which is regarded both by the reason and by the emotions as demanding every possible sacrifice to ensure its preservation. Hence one serious difficulty which faces Pacifists in their proposals for the reduction of armaments. Given the value of nationality—admitted, if only as a sentimental fallacy, by the greatest of all Pacifists, Mr. Norman Angell—the reduction of armaments is looked upon as a wilful weakening of the defensive machinery upon whose strength nationality is at present believed to depend.<sup>1</sup>

This consideration, if the writer may venture to say so, lessens the cogency of that appeal to reason which Mr. Angell directs against the militarism of the great European nationalities. Mr. Angell is of opinion that the appeal of rationalism in the domain of international policy has to meet only what he calls "the immense strength of the intuitive unreasoned impulses we associate with patriotism."<sup>2</sup> But the matter is not so simple. The "patriot" may make out as "reasonable" a case for his nationalism as Mr. Angell does for internationalism. Reason, unfortunately, often plays only a subsidiary part in sublunary affairs; she follows in the train of the passions and is called into their counsels to explain, justify and enforce their decisions. The emotion of patriotic suspicion evoked by suggestions for the reduction of armaments is promptly backed up by a thousand arguments based upon the value of the particular national tradition affected; and this reasoned conception of the importance of nationality can be made the justification of more extensive military preparations than even "intuitive" patriotism has effected.

<sup>1</sup> *International Polity*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70 *seq.*

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It is quite as "reasonable" to regard the militarism of Europe as an instrument for the defence of existing nationalities as it is to regard it as an instrument for their destruction. The appeal is not directed by reason to sentiment alone, but by reason to sentiment backed up by reasons as cogent as any that are to be found on the other side.

It is significant to note that Mr. Norman Angell, in that special branch of international criticism of which he is the recognized master, the sphere of economics, partially adopts the view that practical co-operation between nationalities is the operative principle of international unity. But he does not thereby add strength, but rather the reverse, to any of his arguments against the existence of nationality and its defence by military armaments. "It is," says he, "an integral part of the economic case against war that the nation is not the community in the economic sense if there exist international economic relations at all; that it is integrally a part of the whole community of organized society; that to smite the interest of the whole is to smite itself; that, economically, we are part of the general community to the extent of the nation's economic relation with other nations."<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Angell extends his definition of economics to include all those higher intellectual and spiritual interests which depend upon well-ordered material arrangements: "affection, love, family life, motherhood, fatherhood, the happiness of children, rest after fatigue, achievement after effort—you can prolong the list indefinitely. And these things are bound up with, and depend upon, more material things—health, which means food and clothing and cleanliness; leisure and serenity, which mean an ordered life; efficiency, the capacity to live in society and to do one's work in the world—and you come back to economics, to sociology, to the science of human society. They are all interdependent parts of one great whole, and you cannot separate them."<sup>2</sup> But the difficulty is, that however closely these things may be united in the world of thought, they are separated in life itself. All national qualities are human qualities; a human quality

<sup>1</sup> *International Polity*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.



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becomes a distinctively national quality when its expression is regulated by the forces which operate upon a group of people living in the same social and political environment. And all human qualities exhibited by people under social restraints are governed in their manifestation by educational and other traditions, and by social laws and customs; so that fatherhood and motherhood, affection, love, family life, and all the rest of Mr. Angell's "ultimate realities" are manifested quite differently in different communities, according to the tradition which has been gradually forming through generations of continuous national existence. The French have quite a different ideal of family life from the English; and an Italian's manifestation of his affection for his children has seemed supremely ridiculous to the Englishman with his tradition of greater self-repression in such a matter. To assert that the "ultimate realities" of life are the same in all nations is not to destroy any argument for nationality. The national tradition which guides and colours the form which these "realities" take is the separating factor; and it is reasonable in the highest degree that a nation should be ready to fight to preserve the right to show its love for its children in its own way.

National armaments are primarily instruments for the defence of the nation's right to develop the "ultimate realities," the general human instincts, upon its own lines. Mr. Angell is a cogent assertor of the right of a nation to defend itself against attack. War is then justifiable. But to admit a nation's right to defend its own particular form of social, political and economic structure is to admit that that form has a distinctive value; and to admit that it has a distinctive value is to annihilate the strength of the argumentative appeal to "ultimate realities" as forming the basis of the life of all nations alike. It is not the mere fact of sharing in the common human attributes which combines people into organized associations for mutual assistance and a common social life, but the active participation in operations carried out to secure some common end. It is not the possession of such qualities, but their use in co-operation, which develops a bond of sympathetic

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association in previously hostile communities. The German Empire and the British Empire are, in their own separate national histories, living examples of the truth of this view in the sphere of national life; the social, political and industrial records of both peoples are replete with instances of the operation of this reconciling agency. If we can, in spite of Lord Haldane, deduce from history any objective truth at all, it is a truth which gives a large and generous hope that after many trials and failures, after, perhaps, many centuries of military triumphs and defeats, the same principle will be found in effective occupation of the sphere of international policy.

Already even before the war one could see distinct signs of constant and deliberate action in this direction, when that famous international machine, the "Concert of Europe," was likened by Sir William Ramsay to Dante's conception of a spiritual monarchy. As the *Westminster Gazette* said at the time, the action of the Concert during the Balkan War proved "that nations are capable of being appealed to on grounds that are international as well as on those that are purely national. The idea of a common European interest, as well as a British, a German, an Austrian, or a Russian interest, has been clearly present to all the Governments."<sup>1</sup> The work of the Concert was thus an example of that process of exhibiting nations in active co-operation towards a common end, to a fuller development of which many hopes may still be legitimately directed for the attainment of a safe and permanent condition of international peace and goodwill.

The conception of the "Federation of Europe," or of "European Unity" advocated by some of the most experienced international publicists of the day was a logical, but probably, even under pre-War conditions, remote extension of the work of the Concert; and although the controversies which centred about these projects in the days immediately preceding the war now suggest "the sound of bells from a city sunk beneath the sea," to use Mommsen's fine image applied to the history of ancient Rome, it may

<sup>1</sup> *Westminster Gazette*, May 9, 1913.

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nevertheless be useful to recall the reasons which were advanced in support of the various schemes canvassed in that now distant period. The main currents of opinion were two: one chiefly represented by Sir Max Waechter, the founder of the "European Unity League"; the other by Professor Lujo Brentano, the famous international jurist of Munich. The former contended that the essential condition for the inauguration of a system of European Federation was the formation, in the different nationalities, of a public opinion hostile to militarism and favourable to the action of those already enlightened statesmen and rulers who, it was claimed, were only too anxious to enter into harmonious relationships with each other to reduce military armaments within reasonable limits. The latter admitted the desirability and the possibility of federation, but looked to securing the end by means of the "co-operation of the progressive elements of all European countries in matters concerning their *inner* political constitution and *inner* political life."<sup>1</sup> To the first course it may be objected that so long as the opposing interests of nations loom larger in the public eye than their common interests, all merely verbal arguments, however cogent and logical, which are directed against armaments as a means of advancing or protecting the opposing interests, will be nullified by that suspicion which is corroborated by counter-arguments based upon the value of nationality, and the comparative insignificance of any sacrifice necessary to make its existence secure. As an argument against the alternative view it was urged that it is an unwarrantable and dangerous interference with national concerns—an interference which would have the consequence that "the rulers of the autocratically organized states would persecute those who would venture to bring about the unity of Europe by an agitation tending

<sup>1</sup> *England, Germany, and the Peace of Europe*, by Sir Max Waechter, D.L., J.P. (London: Richard Clay & Sons, Ltd., 1913).—*Sir Max Waechter and European Unity—Views of Sovereigns* (The European Unity League, March 1914). See also article by Vernon Lee with letter from Prof. Brentano in the *Westminster Gazette*, Feb. 18, 1914, and reply by Sir M. Waechter, Feb. 20, 1914.



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towards an international revolution," with serious consequences to the national life of the separate communities. Nor is this apprehension groundless in view of the progress of Bolshevism in Russia, and its aspirations towards the destruction of nationality in other countries.

The difficulties and dangers thus existing in the way of applying either of these methods do not, however, close the door to the solution already suggested in these pages; the method, namely, of spreading a public opinion which would encourage the rulers and statesmen of the nations to enter, on all practicable occasions, into actual co-operation towards securing ends admitted to be the common interests of all the nations alike. The practical exhibition of harmonious co-operation towards common ends would be an object lesson in international solidarity more effective than a thousand verbal arguments. As Lord Robert Cecil said in his "League of Nations" speech at Versailles on February 14, 1919: "Certain it is that if we can once get the nations of the world into the habit of co-operating with one another, you will have struck a great blow at the source and origin of all, or almost all, the world wars which have defaced the history of the world." Such an example of the "habit of co-operation" was given just before the war by the International Conference on Safety of Life at Sea, in which representatives not only of the European States and British Colonies, but also of Japan and the United States, came to an agreement relative to the arrangements to be adopted by all the countries alike, not only for the safety of their own people, but the people of all alike. These arrangements are far-reaching and complicated, involving such matters of international delicacy as the acceptance by all the States of certificates of compliance with the requirements of the proposed Convention issued by any one of them, and the imposition by each of the Governments of penalties in case of neglect to carry out the provisions of the Convention. Even if the Convention had not been ratified by the Governments concerned, the mere fact of the conjoint deliberations of so many nationalities in friendly pursuit of a common

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aim would, as Lord Mersey said at the conclusion of the Conference, "contribute greatly to the increase of mutual respect and confidence among the nations, and thereby to the peace and happiness of the world at large."<sup>1</sup> Co-operation towards common ends has always hitherto tended to secure sympathetic relationships between men and bodies of men in those matters in which their ends have been diverse or even hostile; and the application to the sphere of international activity of a principle which has been so successful in establishing and fostering the amenities of social and national life suggests happy hopes for the eventual creation of that atmosphere of mutual confidence, sympathy and esteem which must be the cause, and not the result, of the dismantling of the naval and military bulwarks of nationality.

Those whose imagination is captivated by the grandiose conception of a League of Nations to be accepted offhand as an instantaneous panacea by a world sick with the shock of war will regard as meticulous, insignificant and mean these suggestions based upon the continued development of pacific activities already in operation before the occurrence of the catastrophe. But it would be at the sacrifice of all sense of historical proportion were we to neglect the results of actual experience because they fall short of the anticipated fruition of a hitherto unrealized ideal. And, indeed, if we regard the problem less from the point of view of those who see in it the promise of an immediate Millennium than from a contemplation of the practical work which has been done at Versailles in the creation of machinery to give concrete shape to the conception, we see that the new proposals are a natural extension of sound and established principles of national evolution into the international sphere. They recognize frankly and fully that the only hope of securing peace and unity among the nations is to find some means for co-ordinating their common interests, and for reducing below the danger-point their competing and hostile interests, and to adapt the machinery of nationality to an international form for the expression of the conception of international

<sup>1</sup> Report in the *Westminster Gazette*, January 21, 1914.

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unity. There is nothing revolutionary or impossibly idealistic, either in the conception of a League of Nations or in the construction of machinery for its practical application. Both are in harmony with settled historical principles. Nor can it be regarded as rash or unstatesmanlike to take advantage of the international atmosphere prevailing after the war—an atmosphere in which Peace is naturally envisaged as the greatest of all the common interests of humanity—in order to secure for the conception support which would have failed a few years ago, and might possibly fail again a few years hence. The dramatic picture presented by the official representatives of many nations acting together in the elaboration of machinery for realizing the ideal of universal peace, for international control of national labour legislation, for the international administration of certain conquered territories, accentuates the pacific state of mind which has made possible the inauguration of so august and auspicious a participation in work towards a common end.

But, in spite of the soundness of the general conception of a League of Nations and of the measures recently taken to prepare for its application to living issues, a detached and philosophic study of history suggests many warnings against forcing the conception upon an international public opinion which is not yet ripe for its acceptance. Although it is true that legislative changes in national life have been at times effected by the energetic persistence of minorities, such changes have succeeded or failed according to the measure in which they were ratified or neglected by the general sense of the community; and many beneficial projects have been postponed, or destroyed outright, by the too rash zeal of their advocates. The conception of a League of Nations is so fraught with issues of good and ill for the world at large that it is especially incumbent upon its advocates to secure it against the dangers of a rash and unpractical idealism by making it an essential condition of their support that the public opinion of the world shall be ripe for its realization.

But is the world ripe for its realization now? Is the public opinion of the various nationalities so



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devotedly and permanently attached to the notion of universal peace as to be ready to accept that diminution of their national claims which must necessarily accompany the acceptance of a predominating international duty? Is not the position somewhat like that existing in face of the earlier proposals for "European Federation"? Is it not probable that a few statesmen, "enlightened" if you will, are really forcing the pace upon a public opinion whose attitude suggests an air of anxious curiosity rather than of enthusiastic devotion or even willing acquiescence? Is there not a shrewd suspicion that the influence of President Wilson's commanding personality has dominated the scruples of some other statesmen who are not yet fully favourable to the project, or who are not conscious of the general support of the people they have been chosen to represent? Experienced critics of political movements in Europe during the last quarter of a century suggest that the machinery elaborated at Versailles will collapse on the first practical test unless its activities are inspired by the goodwill of the peoples as well as by the predilections of their rulers. Even those quarters most closely associated with the advocacy of a League of Nations, and most enthusiastic at even the provisional erection of machinery for effecting its purposes, are not entirely free from alarm at this possibility. The *Westminster Gazette* (Feb. 15, 1919) says: "Whether the League's power of enforcing the peaceful settlement of disputes when they arise will be effective or not may depend for years to come on whether it has succeeded in restraining its members from accumulating the power which would enable them to defy its authority"; an apprehension which, while it exists, is utterly destructive of that mutual trust and confidence which form the idealistic basis of the very conception of a League of Nations, and an apprehension which would be groundless if the public opinion of the different nations were enthusiastically devoted to the realization of the conception. The *Daily News* of the same date expresses the view that "it is of the essence of the League of Nations that it should be a League of peoples and not of Governments, and it can never obtain the command-

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ing authority essential to it unless both the principles on which it rests and the concrete interpretation of those principles in a written constitution have obtained the deliberate and intelligent endorsement of the peoples of the world." And Mr. Gardiner drives the point home in his usual incisive style: "We must not be deceived by the adoption by the Peace Conference of the scheme of the League of Nations. It is a great achievement, but it is only an aspiration: written down on paper, it is true, signed by the plenipotentiaries of the Powers, but still only a scrap of paper. It is useless to ignore the fact that its unanimous endorsement has been wrung out of a good deal of indifference and even hostility" (*Daily News*, Feb. 21, 1919; article, "The Commonwealth," by A. G. G.). These apprehensions and cautions assuredly spring from the root of the matter. The imposition of machinery upon peoples unwilling, or even only unready, to make it an expression of their national purposes will not bring a true League of Nations nearer, but will postpone its realization indefinitely. Even the general and willing consent of the people, given at a particular moment, would not establish the League as a permanent and active institution unless the frame of mind which existed at that moment were perpetuated by a constant propaganda from responsible and powerful sources. Until the state of mind of which the League is an outcome were permanently and inextricably interwoven with the national character as well as the national administration, there would always be a danger that some sudden rush of emotion would carry the nation off its feet and plunge it once more into the old military adventures. We do not know how it would be in the case of a small and unpatriotic community, but if the public opinion of a great Imperial nation, say the British Empire, felt that its just interests, or even its historic pride, were hurt by the demands of a League of Nations, one cannot imagine it acquiescing until it had tested once again the arbitrament of war. We have not found it so easy a task to deal with a hostile public opinion in Ireland that we can think the embattled world would have an easy task to deal with us; not to consider the shatter-

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ing effect it might have upon the structure of the League if one of its principal members were to defy it. The horrors of war remain a very short time in the national memory; but the craving for revenge is almost ineradicable, the pride of victory almost unendurable. It is a commonplace of journalistic observation in Germany that the people claim that their armies have not been defeated in the field; that more careful economic preparation to back military endeavour might in the next war secure results unattained in the last. On the morrow of the publication of the "Magna Carta of the Nations," the "Twenty-six Articles" of the Versailles "Covenant," certain not unrepresentative organs of French opinion were asserting that their country could sacrifice none of its present means of defence to the idealism expressed in the "Constitution" of the League. And in Great Britain herself it cannot be denied that there is a widely prevalent and deeply felt suspicion that some people's advocacy of the League is not uninspired by a desire to see her Navy reduced to less dominating proportions. It may be pessimism, but it is not cynicism, which draws from history the suggestion that the atmosphere following on the war is but superficially and temporarily favourable to the immediate inauguration of a League of Nations, and that the actual and essential predominance of national interests over internationalism will overwhelm all pacifism which hopes to erect itself merely upon a memory of the horrors of the past war or an imaginative anticipation of the greater horrors of an Armageddon still to come. Let our public rhetoricians exhibit all the arts of cultured or popular eloquence in enhancing the charm of the great ideal conception; let our brilliant Liberal journalists devote to it all their power and influence; let our diplomatists confer in the elaboration of machinery to impose the ideal upon the real; let every possible channel of public opinion be flooded with advocacy of a League of Nations for the establishment of universal international concord: they will make the notion familiar; they will educate public opinion in the direction of recognizing peace as the greatest interest of humanity at large; but the course of our previous



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history suggests the probability that for some time to come we shall follow the old paths and look, for the preservation of peace, to the empirical methods of the last few centuries, to an elastic and variable "Concert of Europe," to the "Balance of Power," and other merely temporary alliances, such as depend upon fluctuating and uncertain causes, and are liable to be overthrown by circumstances, domestic as well as international, which the most careful prevision has not anticipated.

But history, if it inculcates caution in entering upon new ways of apparent peace, does not therefore condemn the world to eternal war. The opposite is, indeed, the case. It demonstrates with a certainty almost scientific that if the separate communities encourage, on every possible occasion, co-operation with each other in spheres where their interests harmonize; if they consciously train themselves towards the formation of a public opinion which will bring pressure upon their Governments to seek for opportunities of joint international activity in the spheres of their common interests; if our systems of education inculcate a patriotism inspired by sufficient intelligence to recognize that ours is not the only national tradition of value to the world and to ourselves, and that patriotism, or devotion to the national culture and its home, is a virtue wherever exhibited; nay, even if successive generations of our youth are so trained as to have no national interest and to feel no national pride in anything condemned by a Universal League; if we use our potent machinery of international communion with that spirit of courteous toleration for the opposite view which is the general mark of our national institutions; we shall find in due course—without haste, but without rest—that the process which has produced peace within our borders will produce peace throughout the world; and all the elaborately destructive machinery of militarism will be dropped at last without an effort on the great humanitarian scrap-heap of history's overthrown idols, to be joined there at last by the machinery of pacifism, too, since only communities disposed to war need apparatus to safeguard peace.

Such, then, are the conclusions reached by the writer

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in his examination of the general progress of our national development, and of the special questions springing out of the relationship of the principle of nationality to Peace and War. As harmony has been secured in the national sphere so it is likely to be secured in the international sphere by the free play of the civilizing power of co-operation in the practical work of the world. No student of history would wish to dogmatize about the results of any national or international policy : the most accidental occurrences have been fraught with finer and more beneficent issues than the most rational calculation would have secured. And at the present time, when international relationships are more complicated and intertwined, more delicately balanced and more subtly motivated than ever before, it would be a speculation rash even beyond the reach of a metaphysical philosopher to prognosticate the effect of an alteration in one set of relationships upon all the others and upon the future history of civilization. Still, however, the nations are not only richer in political experience, but the masses of the people are better educated to an appreciation of political issues than ever before, and with a more careful knowledge of the truth of history it is probable that political action will not only be originated with greater intelligence than ever before, but that its results will also be watched and guided with greater intelligence. If, therefore, the nations could be induced more frequently to enter into joint action to advance those larger human ends in which they have a common interest with the object of diminishing or alleviating the animosity of their hostile interests, it is probable that public opinion, fortified by such conspicuous examples of practical wisdom, would become gradually less tolerant of attempts to increase and embitter the spheres of hostile interests and to restrict the spheres of common interests. If that be so, the time will arrive when, without any imposition of disarmament by authority, nationality itself will lose its present intensive value, and take its place as a pleasing but subordinate interest among those larger interests which have been allowed to grow up among all the nations alike. Then the present aggressive

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methods devoted to the protection of nationality will appear universally out of proportion to the object for which they exist; and a special lumber-room of history will be ready for their reception as fit objects of the researches of the archæologist and the antiquary. They will drop out of use simply because they are not wanted, as has been the case with hundreds of pieces of legal machinery which public opinion has not taken the trouble to break but has merely ceased to employ.

Meantime the advocates of peace can find an extensive field for the propagation of reasonable views on national and international questions without stirring up mischievous animosities by direct attacks upon militarism. Any approach, even in an intellectual or artistic sphere, to sympathetic contact between different communities counts something towards the preparation of the fitting atmosphere of conciliation which will make it easier for the rulers of nations to enter into harmonious co-operation for common ends. Although neither a common religion, nor a common literary heritage, nor common scientific attainments, have broken down the barriers which separate nations—because, as we have seen, these general possessions are necessarily coloured by particularist sentiment—yet it is not difficult to imagine that without the broadening of the national outlook due to sympathetic acquaintance with foreign literary, scientific, artistic and religious thought, war between European nations would have been more frequent than has actually been the case. Every lover of peace will, therefore, welcome the work of those multitudinous International Societies which endeavour to bring sections of different communities into sympathetic relationship on the ground of their common interest in matters literary, scientific, legal, mercantile, philanthropic, social, or purely pleasure-seeking. All these agencies cannot but help to prepare a common public attitude which will make extended international action in the great matters of Politics more feasible and more likely to succeed. But the most essential condition on which these various agencies all work is the condition that no matters shall be directly broached which injure the national sentiment of any section of



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the particular society, a practical proof of the unwisdom of direct attacks upon national armaments as embodying national susceptibilities.

The recognition of community of interest as the historic basis of national harmony, and as a practicable basis for international harmony, disposes, at any rate, of any theory of Race as an objective factor in national or international evolution. Our plenipotentiaries worked as harmoniously with those of Japan as with those of the United States in securing safety of life at sea; but there is still a good deal of work to do in destroying the subjective influence of fantastic racial theories; and one might, perhaps, suggest that if there is one sphere suited to the propagation of direct arguments in international affairs it is in spreading the view that Race, on its practical side, is of no importance as an element in social evolution. When once the peoples of Europe are educated into the knowledge that none of them is marked by racial superiority or inferiority to any of the others; that superiority of national character can only be attained by superiority of national achievement, they will cease to entertain the notion that national character is unalterable and therefore unimprovable. Thus will a very important advance have been effected in the direction of preparing a sound public opinion on the subject of nationality, because thus it will be demonstrated that nations are what they are as much because of what they owe to other nations as because of what they owe to themselves. The public opinion of the nations will recognize that everything which narrows, restricts or secludes their national environment will only tend to impoverish their physical, intellectual and moral achievements; and that everything which deepens, widens and enriches their national environment will tend to exalt and perfect them among the peoples of the world. The intelligence of the national populations, thus cultivated and prepared, will operate to broaden still further the scope of national interests, and with wider interests will come wider sympathies, until ever-widening sympathies will necessarily remove from between the nations those hatreds and hostilities which by the same process have been removed from